

*Melius Inquirendum.*

O R, A

SOBER INQUIRY

Into the Reasonings of the

Serious Inquiry:

WHEREIN

The Inquirers Cavils against the Principles,  
his Calumnies against the Preachings and Practises

OF THE

NON-CONFORMISTS

By Vincent ARE Alsop  
Examined and Refelled,

And St. *Augustine*, the Synod of *Dort*, and the Articles of the  
Church of *England* in the Quinquarticular points, vindicated

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*The third Edition, with Corrections and Additions by  
the Author.*

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Prov. 18. 17.

*He that is first in his own Cause seemeth just, but his Neighbour  
cometh, and searcheth him out.*

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To the Ever, and much Honoured S. K.  
Esquire.

Worthy Sir!

I Received yours, which brought along with it both its own welcome, the assurance of your restored health, and continued Love; and also my own entertainment, The serious and Compassionate Inquire. I have now perused it with as much seriousness as 'twas written, and return'd it with more clemency than it deserves; and must confess my self cast down so much the lower by my disappointments upon the Reading it, by how much the flattering title had rais'd me higher to expect from thence more healing counsels. I have read of a Polish Ambassador in Queen Elizabeths days, who at his landing whisper'd it abroad that his Embassy was Peace, but when admitted to his Audience, threatened a war: Her Majesty with invincible patience attended the winding up of his long-winded Oration, and then cries out, Heu quàm decepta fui, Legatum expectavi, Heraldum accepi! I expected a Dove with an Olive-branch in his mouth, and I tread upon a snake, with a menacing sting in his Tail! Just such another treat has your Inquirer given me. The Title rais'd me on tip-toes to see at length that famous weapon-salve which might consolidate the Churches bleeding wounds; but the Book presents me with a weapon ready drawn to render them more wide, and more incurable. You see, Real passion, will not long conceal it self under feigned compassion. *Nemo diu egit Hypocritam!* A feverish preternatural heat in the body, usually breaks out at the Lips! The Crocodiles tears, are but a short formal Grace over his Prey, and yet his importunate stomach thinks his throat cut till it be done! You are pleas'd indeed to recommend it to me, as an Irenic, and when I said, it had rather the mien of a Military Tackick, a friend of ours a little inclinable to be witty, replied, it was neither the one nor the other, but an innocent Game at Tick-tack.

It's come in fashion again I perceive to Lard lean discourses with grave sentences; and therefore that you may not think I am cap't, let me remember you of Seneca. *Infelicitè ægrotat. cui plus periculū medicò, quàm à morbo.* That Patients case must needs be desperate, whose Physician

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is a greater plague than his disease. And that Church must certainly languish, *quæ nec morbum ferre potest nec remedium*, that can neither endure the Remedy, nor the Malady: It's a sad choice, whether we will die of our wound, or our plaister. And therefore your great Pretenders might do well to forbear their slighter Applications, which do but exasperate the Humour; for the more we tamper with improper Means, the less success must we expect from those that are proper and proportionable.

I beseech you Sir! Answer me with more seriousness and compassion, than this gentleman makes inquiries; Can you once imagine these Dissenters so irreconcilably fallen out with themselves, as to maintain an utter Averſion to be disputed out of a Prison into Liberty? To be argued out of Poverty into Plenty? Out of imminent danger, into a safe Retreat? Can you really believe them at such deadly feud with their own ease and Repose, such sworn enemies to their own peace, as to be more ambitious of Ruin, than others are of self-preservation? That they should Court their Miseries with the same passionate Careſſes, that other Inamorato's do their Mistresses? That they should run over one anothers Heads for the first grasp of Destruction, as if they rod Post, all upon the switch and spur for a presentation to a warm Parsonage? That whatever premises of fair and honest conveniences are offered, yet they are so absurdly obstinate as to hold the Conclusion of self-created vexation? Believe it Sir! (I know you believe it!) The Non-conformists are Men as well as their Neighbours, as apprehensive of Trouble, as desirous of tranquility. They have their Interests, and honest concerns too, on this side Another World; Their backs must be clothed, their families must eat, or die: and as, pudicitia, & forma, so conscientia, & integritate, in foro nil emitur. A good conscience is not current coyn in this worlds markets; It will not purchase one dish of meat, though with a good stomach it makes most Excellent sauce; and will make the soul a noble feast Alone. You ought not therefore, you cannot entertain a thought so unreasonable, so uncharitable, That any thing short of sinning against God, and thereby exposing themselves to his displeasure, any thing on this side polluting their Consciences, and so making their best friend their worst enemy, could be a temptation strong enough, to prevail with them to expose to apparent hazard whatever they enjoy of accommodation, to render their Lives desirabler.

You might perhaps please your self with a thought, That the Rhetoric of this Discourse would proselyte one of whose intellectuals you had just cause to think nothing but mean and contemptible. And had I found his Reasons as cogent, as his Stile is fluent; his Arguments as hard, as his words

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words are soft, you could not despair of success upon Him, who is ever ready to offer himself to be practis'd upon at the satisfaction-office: But he that would do his work thoroughly upon an Impartial Inquirer, must use Arguments of Steel, as well as words of Oyl: And the Main thing I complain of in his Declamations is, that whilst we surfeit upon Rhetorick, we are chap-fallen for want of Reason; and the hungry Reader sits picking his teeth like a Spanish Don, after an insipid salade, as if he had dined upon the Oxe at Bartholomew-fair. If ever you saw the sign of the Porter and Dwarf, you have seen the true scale of proportion between his Mellifluous Language, and pitiful argumentation. And I am resolved that no importunity shall prevail with me to Accept A well-measured sentence, or Labour'd period, for a Syllogism, where two gingling words stand for the Propositions, and a decent comely Cadence for the Conclusion: But this I will freely own, that since there is a necessity (which yet we know no Reason for) that the Non-conformists be Reviled, it's some Comfort to be rail'd at in good Language, and to meet with Dirty Matter wrapt up in clean Linnen. And since you will needs have my judgment of the stile and dress, I shall only say thus much. Cum omnis Arrogantia est molesta, illa Ingenii; & Eloquentiæ, est Longè molestissima. All Arrogance is indeed nauseous, but that of wit and Rhetorick in a polemical treatise is a downright Vomit.

They that talk so Confidently that there can be No Unity hoped for among Christians, without Uniformity; nor peace maintain'd, unless all Men be of a scantling in their judgments, or at least, that (though indulged to retain their different apprehensions) they be obliged to conform to the same practise in every circumstance; do seem to me to have entertain'd notions very unworthy the Christian Religion, or perhaps to understand very little of the Nature and design of it. An Epicurean can nuzzle in the same straw with a swine of his own sty: and truly it was well thought on; sævis inter se convenit urfis. But Christianity enlarges our love to a greater Latitude, it raises our affections to a Nobler pitch; cordially to embrace with the best Arms of Good-will whoever are Dignified with the Image of Christ, though not Distinguish'd with our own superscription, nor express the finer strokes of our private conceptions; why can we not love a Christian as he is such, though differing from us in Innocent Accidents, as well as a Man, because he is a Man, though his hair be of another Colour, his face of another Symmetry and complexion than our own?

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*It's true we cannot without Abhorrence and Recoil of Spirit behold those Monstrous births, which nature (designing regularly, yet through the ineptitude of her tools and matter, miscarrying in her operations) does sometimes affright the world with; Nor can we bear those prodigious Heresies, and uncouth blasphemies, the by-blows of depraved nature, begotten by a Corrupt Head, upon a debauched Heart; yet even towards these, we ought not to be more monstrous in our behaviour, than they are in their Nature; One sin will never heal another. Rigorous impositions, will never cure forward sentiments; It was A. B. of Hereford's prescription to cut off the Head, because it Aked; As some Divisions and errors are the works of the flesh, proceeding from pride and passion, nourished by discontent or other unruly lusts, so are some magnified Remedies for those distempers, which smell as strong, and savour as rank of the flesh, as those very corruptions which they pretend to purge away.*

*They do but therefore delude themselves, and abuse others, whose great Ambition it is to Reduce the world into a strict and precise uniformity in every minute punctilio. God has no where promised it, we have no Reason to expect it; All conclude it unattainable, and many judge it not desirable. The Healing Rule must be this, In necessariis unitas: in non-necessariis Libertas, in utrisque Charitas: If our judgments and practices Center in things fundamental, let a Latitude be allowed in the Non-necessary, and a charitable temper be maintained in both, and then shall we see the welcome Dawnings of primitive peace and glory. That Peace which fills up both pages in the gospel, is not founded upon an assent to every inconsiderable Nicetie which an idle and fruitful invention can broach, when he has little else to do; but in cherishing a quick and vigorous spirit of mutual condescension and forbearance of one another under our dissentings. No external application can possibly reach this inward grievance, purge out that *πικροχολία*, the Spirit of Malice, Envy, Hatred, Pride, Revenge, and the wound will heal of it self.*

*It will remain the eternal blot of Pope Victor's memory, that he embroiled both East and West with the quarto-decimane Impertinencies, when he might have allay'd those heats and ferments of Spirit, by removing the Subject of a needless question, or leaving it at Liberty as he found it; but I much mistake my self if ever he, or his Successors in that usurpation, understood the things that belonged to the Churches peace, whose solemn method it was to set the Earth on a flame with sparks kindled from Hell, blown up by imposing Pride; yet all along visibly justified with the specious Plea of uniformity.*

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*Now the Plea (in short) is this: Without Uniformity there can be no Unity, and without Unity we must expect no inward love; Diversity of opinions lead to a diversity of practises; and these alienate the affections, which works it self into factions and parties to the disquiet and rending of the Church, and hazard of the State. But these reasonings lye very naked and open to the judicious and impartial Considerer. For our true Unity lies in the profession of one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, one Spirit, and not in one Ceremony; and our love will therefore be the more eminent, because it has these differences to prove its truth, and exercise its strength: And whatever the evil may be in different apprehensions, the Remedy will never be Halter, but Humility, and Charity; for Humility will School me into this lesson, to think well of the persons, and judg modestly of the principles of those that dissent, when a Halter will sooner break the neck, than convince the judgment: It's easie to play the Hypocrite, and practise what another pleases; but impossible to believe what I please my self: Put now, if these diversities of judgment and practise, shall boyl up into Animosities, which through their ill management shall endanger, or but seem to threaten the safety of the government: The Magistrate in this case has a proper and specifick Remedy of his own, entrusted in his hands by divine right, viz. to reduce Delinquents into the way of sobriety by due punishments, leaving the sober and peaceable Dissenters in the mean time to reap the fruits of their own innocency, with this singular advantage, that they can now learn by the just and exemplary punishments upon others, to watch against those corruptions of their hearts, lest they should break out into any disloyal practises unbecoming the Gospel which they do profess, and should adorn.*

*How beautiful Uniformity is in the eyes of Men, and what deformity the difference of Modes, Rites, forms of worship, carry along with it; rendering Religion it self less pleasing and amiable in the eyes of curious and critical Spectators, is easily pretended; and with equal right and reason might they complain, that God has not made all men of one size, one stature, and thence take occasion to make goodly Declamations against the ugliness of the Creation.*

*The variety which we behold in the Universe, is not its deformity, but its beauty: As the eye is more ravished with a Landscape which enriches it with the grateful interpositions of Hills and Valleys, Woods and Champian, alternately taking up the thoughts, and feeding contemplation with the natural chequer-work of light, and opaque, than if it were let out to lose it self in the uniformity of a vast Horison, or empty prospect; so is the soul more surprized with the glory of the Christian Religion, when various apprehen-*

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*sions agree in the same substantial holiness, and several statures bear the Image of the same God: one Star differing from another in Glory, yet all shining with a Light borrow'd from the same fountain, the smallest eye of heaven filling up a place in the Asterisms of those of the first Magnitude. If indeed all men were soundly cudgell'd into one even way of profession and practice, they whose design it is to steep out their days in ease, might enjoy themselves, and their Acquisits over Conscience, with more soft and delicate touches of carnal contentment, dreaming all the while that the world is their own; yet still the minds of men would sit as uneasie under such Rigours, as he that pinches his body with too strait a suit, only to recommend himself to acceptance by the new and obtaining fashion: And as we observe an uneasie suit soon becomes an old suit; so they that sit pinch'd under a straight-laced Religious form, do but grumble, and make sour faces, waiting the good hour when they may fairly and honestly discharge themselves of an ungrateful cumber.*

*What advantage this Inquirer may promise to him'self from such a way of writing, I cannot divine. The best use I conceive to be made of it, is to support the evil consciences of the Ministers of their fury at such tolerable rates, that they may not tear their souls in peices: for persecution for Religion, is an impiety so abhorrent to the common light of Mankind, that conscience, though for a while perhaps it may contract a Lethargick-drowsiness, yet will awake and mutter, and grumble fitly to be made a Pandar to covetousness or malice, a stalking-horse to base revenge, or to hold a candle to the Devil; and when it shall begin to lowre and scold, 'twill no little gain that will make a sop for that barking Cerberus, no small fee will bribe it to hold its tongue. But now in comes one of these plausible Declamations, rendring the principles of the Dissenters so silly, their grounds so weak, their lives so wicked, their practises so ridiculous, and yet of such treasonable and schismatical Tendencies, which kushes the clamour of conscience, and like the jogging of the Cradle rocks the peevish thing asleep again as soon as it begins to whimper.*

*Really Sir! I cannot but exceedingly pity and pray for a sort of persons of your own Quality, who to their more refined Extract, having added all the ornaments of polite literature, and those more graceful accomplishments fetcht home by Travel, and a freer converse in the world, besides that Honour which they have bravely won in the Field, and creditably worn at home, have yet their judgments so far imposed upon, their spirits so imbuiter'd by prejudices formed from mis-representations, as to become the instruments of other mens passions in executing those severities, which their calmer thoughts, and more sedate Advise-ments must needs Regret; and though a true gene-*



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rous English temper, valiant, but not cruel, may confidently claim the Magnanimous Lyon (*Cui satis est prostrasse*) as the Emblem of Courage mixt with Clemency, for his Crest; yet some few of more rigid inclinations will depopulate and lay waste many a mile about them, who when they behold an odd kind of Peace, as the happy fruits of their cruelties, applaud themselves for persons of deep judgment, and great success, stilling Desolation, Universal quiet.

If you ask me why I have not underwritten my Name? besides that you know it well enough without my subscription, you may be pleas'd to remember what you once told me, That though Truth needs no Mask, she may want a Helmet; and seeing she desires no better, do not grudge her the covert of darkness. Innocency knows no guilt that should Dye her face with shame, yet she apprehends danger, which may make her Pale with fear. Truth seeks no corners, as to the justice of her cause; and yet she may seek a corner as to the injustice of her Judg. I am not conscious to my self of any evil design; but they who will call Preaching, Prating, will hardly scruple to call my Ears Horns, and I am not to be judg in the case.

I am confident you commiserate our hard fate, and the unequal terms our buffing Antagonists impose upon us: They challenge us to a paper-duel in the most provoking Language, such as would set an edg upon the most obtuse coward. If modesty, and ambition for peace, or love of retiredness tempt us to decline the combat, we are then posted up for cowardise; but if we awaken so much spirit as to take up the Gauntlet, and return the mildest Answer, then trusty R. gets it in the wind, and immediately summons his Hamlets, raises the whole posse Ecclesiæ, and Spiritual Militia upon us, and strangles the helpless Infant in the Cradle: A wary Answer may sometimes steal off the form before it's started, then comes in Mr. Warden M. (the common Hunt) whistles out the whole pack of his infallible Beagles, pursues, runs down, catches the poor fugitive, and then you know to seize a book is the most effectual way to confute it: If one in a thousand has the happy success to escape this Inquisition, then the new Smectymnian Divines, or Convocation of the Coffee-house will reply upon it, that they will; if it was pen'd with becoming seriousness and gravity, they have one Reply; This is nothing but whining, or Raving: if the stile be brisk't with a dash or so of facetiousness, they have one word ready to confute it, This is Drollery, Burlesque, buffoonry! A blank Imprimatur lay ready every week against poor Robin (the doughty second of the Friendly debate, and Ecclesiastical Polity) creeps abroad; and to all his blasphemies, obscenities, scurrilities, ribaldries, the privileged underwrites, This may be  
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printed: If Mr. Sh. goes big with some of his illegitimate Socinian-fooleries, a Chaplain waits at the door to midwife the Brat into the world: But if a piece comes out with little zeal of Ceremonies, though in vindication of the old Doctrine of the Ancient Church of England, it expects nothing but Lydford Law, first to be condemn'd, and afterwards perhaps to be try'd: Against all which I see no other remedy, but silent complaints, or it may be this short Rejoinder, Tolle Legem & fiat disputatio!

But I have already given you too much trouble; what remains must be mine own, to study to be Master of a calm, serene, submissive frame of heart, which may enable me to suffer like a Christian, for doing like a Christian: And if after all, I cannot escape the lash of virulent Tongues, and violent hands, yet at least I may not fall under the severer stings of my own conscience.

I shall not need to beg of you to give this Paper a leisurely and impartial perusal, 'tis so agreeable to your own Nature, and that strict Law which your own Wisdom has impos'd upon you, Not to pass a final judgment upon any thing, before you have duely weighed all things; that as I cannot suspect you will decline your constant and fixed method in my single case, so I can hardly prevail with my self to ask that as a favour, which you in justice must needs grant.

I shall only beg the pardon of this interruption given to your important concerns; and if you smile sometimes at my simplicity, let that be the sharpest correction your affection will suffer you to give to

Honoured Sir!

Your much obliged Servant, and

most unworthy Friend.

G. W.

The

*The Introduction Considered, and the Enquirer's expected Advantages from his Comparison between the Religion of the former and present Times, seasonably disappointed.*

**A** Rhetorical Introduction is nothing but a Politick Shooing-born to draw on an incredible discourse more smoothly over the Readers tender Belief, in case he should prove too high in the Instep: Or you may please to call it a Lesser Wedge, prudently applied to a Knotty piece to make way for a greater; For with such grave Maxims, wise men arm themselves, To drive that Wedge, not which is best in it self, but which will go. The Learned *Verulam* observes, That they are not those stinks, which the Nostrils straight abhor and expel, which are most pernicious; but such *Airs* as have some similitude with mans Body, and so insinuate themselves, and betray the Spirits. Thus downright Railing Discourses are in part their own Antidotes; and we stop our Noses at those fulsome eruptions of some writers, who have been certainly fed a long time with Carrion; whereas these more plausible Pests recommended to our gusto by the Vehicle of supple phrase, and glib expressions, and with all Aromatized with a whiff of pretended Charity, creep into the affections, and so with ease betray the judgment; for *Perit judicium cum res transit in affectum*. When a Controversy once gets fair Quarter in the affections, it will soon undermine, and blow up the understanding; so hard it is to perswade, that it can be Poyson which is sweet, or destructive to Nature which accommodates it self to the Critical Humours of the Palate.

It has pleased the Enquirer (upon Mature advice no doubt) to usher in the main Body of his Discourse, with a Pathetical comparison between the ancient state of Christianity, and the present; and he very affectionately laments the Change: wherein he imitates the vain humour of our young travellers, who at their return unmeasurably predicate the glories of foreign Countreys; but can find nothing but mean and contemptible to bestow on their Native Soil: Whether it be that they would be thought to know something more  
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than those home-bred Snails which never travell'd beyond the sight or smell of their own Chimneys ; or that they presume to shelter themselves under that *Protection* which all great Travellers are supposed to carry in their Pockets ; Yet this is certain, that *far-fetcht* and *dear-bought*, will recommend a very trite and ordinary story, to the Acceptation and Admiration of *the Many*.

The Poets are never more transported into pleasing extasie, than when they are gotten into the *Æsullæ* of the *Golden Age* ; and then the Rivers shall flow with pure *Nectar and Milk* ; The Trees distil *Life Honey* ; and the Prodigal Earth, without cultivation, gladly exhaust her Spirits, and spin out her Bowels to pay Tribute to the satisfaction of Mankind ; with a great many more Pedantick good-morrows ; But when once that *Iron Age* appeared with its Harden-face ; *Pandora's Box* was then open'd, and whole Legions of Furies invaded the world. But above all, *Navigation and Trade*, those two implacable enemies to all Religion, were invented ; and I cannot sufficiently admire, that amongst all the *Reasons* muster'd up against those *Schismatical Evils*, This Primitive one, That *they came in with the Iron Age*, escaped our Enquirers Industry,

As all good Christians are ready to give the Primitive times their due praises, and as willing to lament the Degeneracy and Apostacy of the present ; so they look upon it as a piece of Incivility no modest person would be guilty of, to spend all his *Frankincense* in embalming the memory of the Ages Dead and gone ; whilst the present lies like a rotten Carcase stinking above-ground without the curtesie of a Flannel throw'd to cover its nakedness. A vanity (to say nothing more severe) noted by Wisdom it self, *Ecclesi. 7. 10. Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these ? For thou dost not Enquire wisely concerning this.*

Had this Gentleman concern'd himself to appear a wise and impartial, as well as a Compassionate Enquirer, he had never been guilty of that folly to pelt witty Sentences and apothegms at his Readers head, as Boys do Snow-balls, which with equal ease, and execution, may be retorted. For thus might a vulgar *Ingeny* form a Panegyrick of the Singular Piety and exemplary Holiness of those Primitive Christians : " That they employed their Affections in keeping the old " Commandments, and never strained their Inventions to find out " new ones : They made no more Duties, nor Sins, than God had " made ; and left the way to Heaven no narrower, the Gate no " firaiter than they found it : They judg'd him a good man that

squared

“ squared his Conversation, a pious man that modelled his Devotions by that of the Word, though he knew no other Rubrick: They contented themselves with Gospel-simplicity, and durst not be wise above what was written, lest they should prove learned fools: They understood what a Spirit of bearing with, and forbearing of one another signified; And the Fathers of the Church approved themselves to deserve that venerable Character, who never dashed out their Childrens brains, because their Heads were not all of one Block.

That little wit which there is in these popular Trappings, is only this, To single out the most *eminent Instances* of Refined Sanctity in the Primitive times, and from thence to take the *general measures* of their Devotion; and then again to cull out the most *Infamous Examples* of prodigious Villanies in the present Age, and from thence to give us the *Idæa* of our Modern Piety; that is, to make a misshapen Parallel between the *Flower* of those, and the *Bran* of these days.

He that would make a right judgment of the *wealth* of a Nation, must not visit the *Hospitals* only: He that would take a just Prospect of a Nations *Piety*, must not inform his Pencil from the Records of *Newgate*, or the Executions of *Tyburn*: Or if he would be satisfied in the *sweetness* of a City, I would not advise him to hang his Nose over the *Vaults* and *Common-shores*: Or if he would take the exact Height of the Nations *Glory*, let him not take instructions from some *depopulated Village*: If we consider the *best of the worst man*, or the *worst of the best man*. If we only view the Mole or Wart upon the *fairest face*, and some *single feature* in the most *deformed*, we may easily betray our selves in this false judgment, that *Thersites* was a great *Beauty*, and *Absolom* a *Gorgon*: Thus if we will denominate the lapsed Ages from some *eminent Rarities* of Virtue; or the present, from some notorious Examples of Impiety, we shall never distinguish between the Common-wealth of *Plato*, and the Dregs of *Remulus*.

Suppose we, that some Tribunitial Orator, to exercise the gallantry of his Pen in a Theme so common and copious, would set himself to decry the *Piety* of that other World, let him Copy out the *Treachery* of *Judas*, exaggerate the *Apostacy* of *Demas*, the Heretical pravity of *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*; let him enlarge upon the *Ambition* of *Diotrephes*, the *Blasphemies* of *Cerintus*, the *Debaucheries* of the *Nicolaitans*; and above all, be sure to plie the Villanies

Villanies of the *Gnosticks* with warm Cloaths, and what a frightful *Medusa* would that Age appear, if drawn to the life by those Exemplars?

Suppose once more, that our Orator had an itch to employ his mercenary Pen, to scrape acquaintance with some tempting preferment; to reconcile his lines to the Genius of the present Age, and imploy his Talents where he shall not lose his oyl and pains; Let him with *Apelles*, take up on trust the particular Excellencies of the most exemplary Christians; let him borrow the single Beauties of Meekness, Patience, Humility, Charity, Faith, Self-denial, Constancy, that like the *Sporades* lie dispersed and scattered up and down the world; let him Amasse all the individual worthinesses that are not yet banisht to Heaven, and unite all these in one Table, and such a draught perhaps shall not need to be ashamed to shew its face before the most exact pieces of proportion that are reserved in the Archives of Antiquity. And to speak a plain truth, if one tenth part of what these men ascribe to their great Patrons in their *Dedictory Epistles* were true, I could easily evince that there are very few who have the disposal of fat advowsons, but are more *Illustrious Saints*, than any of the *Primitive Fathers*, and perhaps we shall not need to except the *Twelve Apostles*.

As he would scandalously reproach the stable fixed Providence of God, that should conclude Nature to be almost worn off her legs, her Powers enfeebled, her Spirits debilitated from the precocious deaths of those who dig their graves with their teeth, and with the sheers of Luxury and Riot cut the thread of their lives before Reason would say it was half spun out to its just length; so would he no less maliciously blaspheme the steady Reglement and superintendency of the only Head and Governour of the Church, with the efficacious influences of the H. Spirit upon the Souls of true Christians. who from Hypocrisie the mother, and her daughter Apostacy, of those who Court Religion for her Dowry, shall conclude against the power of Godliness in those Christians, which is very conspicuous to all who are not concern'd in point of self-preservation, and self-justification, to decry real Holiness according to the *Primitive Pattern*, whilst they would be thought the great Adorers of the *Primitive Times*.

A practice well-becoming the Legions of *Beelzebub*, or the Trainedbands of *Accaron*, whose delight it is with the importunate Flie, to fix upon the galled parts, exasperating sores with their venomous

nomous probosces, which would heal of themselves; whilst prejudice will not suffer them to take notice of the entire and sounder parts.

What Arguments our Enquirer hath furnish'd Atheism with to wound Religion, which he would pretend to heal, I shall not need to observe, they are a generation quick-sighted to espie and take their advantages without a Monitor: But when I hear him lament *the palpable contradiction of the lives of the Generality of Christians now, to the Rules of their own Religion; and that few take the measures of their Actions, or the Rule of their lives from the New Testament*, I expect to hear others ask, why they should be more obliged to the Humility, Self-denial, Sobriety recommended in the Gospel, than their Teachers, who apparently conform themselves to the secular Grandeur and swelling Pomp of the most licentious times? And if a plain Truth might be spoken, without any ones taking snuff, there can be no more Reason assigned, why *the People* should be tyed up to the Rules of the N. T. in their lives, than *Church-men* are to make it the Rule and Rubrick of their worship: They who expect *Primitive Submission*, must give *Precedents of Primitive Moderation*: And if they will exact and challenge the *Ancient Manners*, let us see in them the *Ancient Examples*: In vain shall *Mother Crab* command her daughter to creep forward, if she confutes her instruction by creeping backward.

If then Matters be really so Retrograde, and gone off from their true Centers; yet it cannot become them to Condemn the World for being *Wrong*, who resolve it shall never be *Right*. He that complains things are not *as they were*, and yet Disputes that they ought to be *as they are*; shall never dispute me into a Plerophory of his sincerity. They that confess a want of *the Ancient Disci. line*, which yet they will not restore, and complain at the same time of a Defect of *the Ancient Piety*, which they pretend they cannot Remedy, do but weep over *the Vineyard* which is laid wast, whilst they either pluck up the Hedge, or refuse to repair the decayed Mounds and Fences; or deplore an Inundation of *Wickedness* which is broken in upon us, and yet stand by the Sluce, and will not shut it down, nor suffer others to do it, because they have no Call to the Work.

All things in this lower World insensibly contract corruption, and with a silent foot decline from their Original Integrity; so that every day furnishes us with New Reasons to scowr off the encroaching Rust, and restore them to their Primitive Brightness.

He

He that rows against the Stream, must incessantly ply his Arms, and Oars, and work against the pressing importunity of the Current, or else shall find himself unawares hurried down the Stream.

— Sic omnia favo,  
In pejus ruere, ac retro sublapsa referri. Virg.

It was a seasonable Question of a Great Person many years ago, *Why the Civil State should be purged and restored by good and wholesome Laws, made every Third or Fourth Year in Parliament, providing Remedies as fast as Time breedeth Mischiefs; and contrariwise the Ecclesiastical State should still continue upon the Dregs of Time, and receive no alterations now for this five and forty years, and more? And I am sure it's another five and forty years and upwards since that Complaint was made.*

It will then be very seasonable to complain of *Modern Corruption*, and cry up *Primitive Devotion* in these Men, when they shall demonstrate a real willingness to reduce what is a miss, into order, to make what is crooked straight, by the *Primitive Rule of Reformation*.

That the *Conversation of those early Christians was commendable*, I readily admit; that there is a wretched Degeneracy in our days, I sadly see; yet give me leave to Note and Detest the Hypocrisie of those who build Stately Monuments to, and bestow Ranting Epitaphs upon the *Deceased Piety* of the Former, and yet destroy or discourage the Remaining Piety of the present Age: That pluck down the Living Temples of the Spirit, that upon their Ruins they may build their own Palaces; who first Stigmatize *Primitive Holiness* with the Modern Brand of Fanaticism; and then persecute it; and the same time Canonize *Primitive Superstition* for the Christian Religion, and then *Impose it*.

But our Inquirer has mark'd out some of the peculiar Glories of those Elder Times, and perhaps it may not be unpleasant to the Reader to run over with me some of their Excellencies.

1. *Of old to be a Christian, was to be all that's Holy, Just and Good, &c* When I read these juvenile Declarations in praise of Vertue, I am ready to snatch the Answer out of his mouth, who replied in a case not unlike: *Quis enim unquam vituperavit?* I wonder whoever spoke one word against it? But it's easie to strain a String till it breaks, which being screwed up to its just height, would bear



bear its part in the Harmony. To be *All that's Holy, All that's Just, All that's Good*, is the Glory of Him whom 'tis our Duty to imitate, our Folly to strive to equalize: In a limited sense 'tis the Glory of those Blessed Ones, who are *Comprehensores*; to be really *Holy, truly Just, sincerely Good*, is pretty fair for those that pass under the Notion of *Vitiores*: But if this were the Character of Primitive Saintship, the Apostle Paul must not have worn a *Red Letter* in our Enquirers Calendar, who professes, Phil. 3. 12, 13. That he had not already attained; neither was already perfect, nor counted himself to have apprehended; but yet he reached forth unto those things which were before; he press'd towards the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

2. *Wherever Religion came, it was a Principle of Purity in Mens hearts, honesty in their lives, and peace in Kingdoms, &c.* Wherever Religion came! *Why Religion may come*, either in the Declaration of it, or in the Power, and Cordial Acceptation of it. And I presume this Enquirer will not assert, That *wherever Religion came in the former sense*, it had those blessed effects in the Purest Primitive Times; and I am confident he cannot deny, that *wherever it comes in the latter sense*, it produces those happy Fruits even in the worst of Times. But so easie it is to render trivial and common matter plausible to the Ear, whilst we are cheated with a *Charivary of sounding Brass*, or the Ditty of a *rinking Cymbal*.

3. But then the *Christian Faith was not a Trick of Wit*. In itself indeed it was not, nor is so now; yet crafty Knaves would venture then, *καταλυει τον λογον του Θεου*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. to dilute the *Pure Wine of Gods Word* with the watry mixtures of their own Invention; and we have those still that will be shewing such tricks of audacious wit upon it now.

What therefore he quotes from *Lactantius*, any man may venture to say, and never hurt himself, or spoil his credit. Give me a fierce and contentious Man; and if he will but apply himself to the Grace and Institutions of the Gospel, he shall become as meek as a Lamb: let a covetous Person bearken to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and he shall presently dispense his Money. Nay, for once I will say as bold a word as that comes to: Give me the most inhumane and barbarous Persecutor, that without scruple of Conscience eats up Gods People like Bread; and if he will but conform to the Doctrine of the Gospel, he shall be forced to take out a new Lesson, and turn over a new Leaf, and of a bloody Saul, become a Paul; pro-



fels, or preach the same Jesus whom he has so outrageously persecuted: Give me that Church-man that seeks his Peoples goods more than their good; he that heaps *Ossa* upon *Pelion*, and *Olympus* upon both, one Steeple upon another, and a third upon the former, as if he hoped either to *Scale* or *Purchase* Heaven, to take it by *Storm* or *Surrender*; and let him but attend, and give up himself to those documents which he either *Preaches*, or however *Reads*, and he shall presently refund the *Price of Souls*, and errogate upon the *Members of Christ*, what he had once squeezed out of *Spungy Consciences*.

But the Heathens could boast as much as this comes to, of their Moral Precepts.

*Invidus, Iracundus, acer, vinosus Amator:*

*Nemo adeo ferus est ut non mitescere possit,*

*Simodo culturae patientem commodet Aurem. Horat.*

4. Then the Professors of Christianity were all of one Heart, and one Lip; there was then but one Division of Men: *ἰωσῆς & ἀρσῆς*, were the only Sects the World was divided by: All good Men were of one way, and all evil Men of another.

I have seriously considered for what juncture of Time this Eloquent Period was calculated; and when those happy days did shine, that might deserve so fair a Character: And I conclude it must be some *Pre-Adamitical* State, commencing with the *Ju'ian Period*, or at lowest that of *Paradise*, where we may probably conjecture, That all good Men were of one mind, because there was but one Man there. But if the Enquirer would acknowledg it as a favour, I would shew him how he might reconcile his Rhetorick to Truth, which is not often feasible: All good Men were of one way, the way of Holiness leading to Happiness; And all evil Men were of another way, the way of Sin and Impenitency which leads to Misery: But so it is still, and thousands of Ages will never alter the Case. But then, to be of one heart and lip in the minute Circumstances of Religion, that I never heard all Men were, nor never expect they will be so on this side absolute perfection. The Roman Church even in the Apostolical Times, was not without its Heats and Animosities: Some there were, who being weak in the Faith, discerned not their Christian Liberty, but confined themselves to *Saladas*, and judg'd others that went beyond their *short Tedder*, as *Libertines*, and Men of a *Latitudinarian Conscience*; others who were strong, and understood that Christ had emancipated them from the Yoke of *Mosaical Ceremonies*;

*Ceremonies*, used their freedom, and these despised the rest, as a company of scrupulous Coxcombs; What fierce bandyings and jostlings there were in the Church of *Corinth*, whilst one Party hangs out the *Ensigns of Paul*, another shelters it self under the headship of *Peter*; and perhaps a third not afraid to entitle the *Prince of Peace* to their *Quarrels*, and draw in Christ himself to be the head of a *Faction*: And yet these were all Members of the same Church; and whilst agreeing in the Substantials of Religion, the Apostle durst not strike in with one Party, to crush the other, but maintains the *Flame of Charity* alive, amidst the *Sparks* of their Contentions in things remote from the Foundation.

That great Promise that God would make his People of *one Heart*, and *one Lip*, is either *not understood*, or *not fulfilled*; or if fulfilled in some measure, yet the more glorious *Accomplishment* thereof reserved for Times and Persons of a more healing Temper, and to be brought about by more proportionable means, than *Gibbets*, *Halters*, *Fire* and *Faggot*, viz. the pouring out the *Spirit of Light and Love*.

I think I may refer it to almost any one to judg, whether he be not most ridiculously absurd, that shall so severely Animadvert upon *our present Divisions*, when he may at such easie and cheap rates heal them all, and yet will not. By some *Mens words* you would think they *hated Divisions* implacably; but by their *actions* you would think they *lov'd them* as desperately.

Let the Primitive Rule of Reformation, of which the Reverend Dr. *Pierce* has minded the forgetful Age, be severely attended to; To set what is crooked straight, by what was from the beginning; Let all the Churches Conform to it, and Reform by it, and then will discord be as great a stranger amongst *Christians*, as Peace is said to be at this day. Lay but the weight and stress of *Unity* upon *Necessaries*, in the rest exercise *Charity*; and then as we never had *Peace* about the Institutions of *Men*, so we shall never have *Wars* about the *confess'd Institutions of Christ*.

The Christian Religion numbers it amongst its peculiar Glories, and *chiefest Singularities*, that it teaches us to maintain brotherly Love, under differing *Apprehensions*, and variety of *Practises*, in those lesser matters, which neither weaken Holiness, nor cross the design of the Gospel.

As God in the first Creation formed Men of differing Sizes, various Statures, and multiform Shapes and Complexions, and yet none

quarrel upon that account; none is so *Apish* to enact, that the *Fox* shall cut off his *Train*, because the other has none. None will impose his own height as the just standard of all others that he that is a hairs-breadth taller shall be adjudged a *Monster*, and he that is as much lower shall wear the reproach of a *Dwarf*: So in the new Creation, it's none of Christ's design to reduce all sincere believers to an *uniformity* in every *Punctilio* in judgment and practise, but to perform a Nobler and more glorious work than this, namely to infuse such a *Spirit of Love*, and from thence such *healing counsels*, 'to inspire into all his Disciples such *Moderation*, such *Condescension*, that notwithstanding these diversities they may all love as Brethren, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; and if in any thing any one be otherwise minded, to wait till the God of Peace from the word of Peace should reveal it unto him.

Nor indeed is it any credit to the Religion of our Saviour, to be represented to the World, as if it taught so narrow and restrained a *Charity* that would only embrace those that were cast in the Mold of our own particular persuasions: or to hang on a string only with those who jump in with our own Points to a Tag: An Excellency, if it be one, to be found more eminently amongst the Lyons in the Tower, the *Turks* in their *Mosques*, or perhaps of old in the *Affrican* Conventicle, (much Reviled, and as much Imitated) who Monopoliz'd Salvation to them that were *Ex parte Donati*.

But that which is the most pleasant in this Period, is, To see what a world of Truth our Compassionate Enquirer has Massacred for the sake of one poor sorry *Climax*. There are now (says he) almost as many Opinions as Men, as many parties as Opinions, and as many Religions as either. That almost may, I confess, do him some service; it has in its days help'd many a lame Dog over the Stile: But surely there may be great diversities of Opinions amongst them that are of the same Religion; He might as well conclude, that the *Spaniard* and the *French* are of two Religions, because the one buttons his Doublet upwards, the other downwards. I have been much taken with a Decree that I found in B. *Jewel*, made by Pope *Innocent III.* and might have become a far better Man.

Quoniam inplerisque partibus, intra eandem Civitatem, & Dioecesim, permitti sunt populi diversarum linguarum, habentes sub unâ Fide, varios Ritûs. & Mores, Distinctè præcipimus, ut Pontifices hujusmodi Civitatum provideant viros idoneos, qui secundum diversitates Rituum, & Linguarum

*Linguarum, divina illis officia Celebrent, & Sacramenta Admini-  
strent.*

“Forasmuch as in most places, in the same City and Diocess, there  
“are people of divers Languages mingled together, who under one  
“and the same Faith, do retain differing Ceremonies and Customs; we  
“do therefore expressly charge and command the Bishops of the said  
“Cities and Diocesses, to provide able Persons, who may Celebrate  
“amongst them the Divine Offices, and Administer to them the Sa-  
“craments, according to their differing Languages and Ceremo-  
“nies.

Differing Rites and Observations, whilst left indifferent, will not  
make differing Religions; what they may do, when imposed as the ne-  
cessary Terms of Communion, I shall not Determine.

Nay, that there are as many Parties, as Opinions, will need not only  
some Grains. but whole Bushels of Salt to keep it sweet: Do we not  
see those of the same Party indulge each other in their private concep-  
tions; and none more than they who most Triumph in a pretended  
Unity and Uniformity, who can agree in few things amongst them-  
selves, and yet can sweetly accord to extirpate all but them-  
selves?

5. *Time was* (says our Enquirer) *when Men sacrificed their Lives*  
*in Testimony to their Faith, as frankly as since they have done to their*  
*Passion, Revenge, and Ambition. And That is* (says another) *when*  
*Men will sacrifice the Lives of their Brethren, and the Peace of the*  
*Church to the same waspish Deities, and their own Consciences to boot, to*  
*another Idol known of old by the Name of Mammon.* Such Elegant O-  
rations have we penn'd about *Time was*, and *Time is*, that I suspect  
they were indited from Frier Bacon's Brazen Head-piece. But more  
Anger still! *Then was Charity counted as Essential a part of Religion,*  
*as Censoriousness is now with too many.* This is witty enough in all rea-  
son! And one would not stick to break a Jest now and then, though  
it broke anothers Head, or perhaps his own with the Splinters. But  
Men are bad enough, and need not be made worse than they are:  
Censoriousness is a Crime too *Odious* to be *Defended*, and yet too  
*notorious* to be *denied*; to *cover a fault* will make it *two*; but to *justi-*  
*fy it*, will make it *many*: But yet that any should make this Cen-  
soriousness a *part*, much more an *Essential part* of their Religi-  
on, is an Hyperbole too daring for my weak Faith to meddle  
with.

I have been considering into what place of Religion they can possibly crowd it, whether into *their Creed* or *Ten Commandments*: The Papists have rob'd the people of just *one half* of a Sacrament, and then to give them their due, to make them ample satisfaction, they have created *five entire Sacraments de Novo*: They have craftily also purloyned the *whole second Commandment*; but then, because the Laity have an inkling that there were once Ten of them, lest they should miss one out of the Decalogue, they have very discreetly split the *Tenth* into a *Couple*: But where to wedg in this *Censoriousness*, was a great difficulty, and had continued so, had not some repealed the *fourth Commandment*, as purely *Ceremonial*; and therefore if any where, *there* it must go.

Some perhaps may Censure this Censurer as guilty of more Censoriousness than half the World besides; but such do not consider, that we must allow for shrinking in the Silk-grograin Phrase of Rhetoricians; what a flat, humble, low, jejune expression had it been to have said, *Truly Men are too Censorious*! But now the Stile mantles, and the Language bristles, and burnishes, it comes off with a Nobler Grace, it fills the Mouth, and sounds augustly, to say, *They make it an Essential part of their Religion*.

6. *Nothing was then thought too good, or costly, for the Service of God, or Religion: Men could not content themselves to serve God with that which cost them nothing. It was one, a Julian, or such another, that envied the costly Vessels wherewith Christ was served. Ay! Time was indeed, (and pity it is, so good a Time had not its Wings clip'd from flying away!) Time was, that Mens money burnt their Pocket-bottoms out, when the fire of Purgatory made it too hot for the most frozen Usurer to hold: but now alas, that Time is past. — And so the Brazen Head fell down, and dash'd out its brains! If these things be truly represented, and that the glory of the Primitive Times did consist in pompous Devotions, Polished Altars, Gilded Organs, Sumptuous Candlesticks, Embroidered Copes, Silken Cowles; much good may it do them, we neither envy, nor shall imitate their Inimitable Excellencies.*

If *Julian* envied the Plate wherein Christ was served, let him grow lean with envy; but surely the Chronicles are hugely wide, if these matters be not mislaid: The cost and charges at which the Primitive Christians were in the Service of their God, and Saviour, was quite another thing; they bestowed their hearts upon him, bore reproach

reproach for him, laid down their lives, and whatever was dear to them in defence of his Truth: Silver and Gold they had none, and Christ as little need of it.

However, that Age could not well upbraid the present with irreligion, if the true measure of Gods Worship be to be taken from its exterior *Garb and Splendor*: As we cannot mock them with their *Wooden Presbyters*, so I am certain they could not us with *Wooden Chalices*; at least in this one particular I expect he should retract, and freely own, that for *costly Worship* (which is the main) we have sheer out-vy'd the *primitive Times*.

I shall not much concern my self to reflect upon that useful policy of those who have imposed upon the *credulous World*, a belief, that whatever is devoted to the *priests*, is therein *Consecrated to God*: but yet I may silently admire the easiness of those Ages that suffer'd themselves so tamely to be abus'd: And above all, I cannot but wonder at the *Chaldeans*, a people renowned for wisdom, that they could once be perswaded by the *priests of Bell*, that his Hungry Deity had devoured all that good Beef and Mutton, which their blind Devotion offer'd at his Altar. The Truth is, their *own Belly was their God*, and poor *Bell* bore all the blame of their gluttony. Thus what they got over their Idols back, they spend it under his, or upon their own insatiable Paunches. It's no new thing for Sacred Names to give Patronage to Avarice: Thus the Kite soars aloft, as if she designed *Heaven*, when her steady Eye is fix'd upon the *prey below*: and glorious pretences to endow the Holy Mother Church, had almost reduced the Lay-world to beggery.

7. *In those early days the Christian Assemblies drained the Theatres, Ay! But where's the Antithesis? But now (so it should run) the Theatres have drained the Christian Assemblies: But that had been a Repartee too close and home for one that would be kind to himself. Had the Primitive Preachers exposed their own Religion, they had never drained the Theatres; and if our Modern Pulpits will drive that Trade, The Theatres will drain the Water, if not draw the Grist from their Mill; for they know how to expose Religion more ingeniously, and more effectually.*

But what other issue must we expect, when some Clergy-men shall frequent, others plead for, and justify the Play-houses? when the Beares, with their decent and harmonious Bagpipes; the Fencibles with their ratling Drums shall find fair quarter, shall have free in-

gress, egress, and regress, when yet some Christian Assemblies are disturbed, and broken in pieces.

We poor folk are apt to think, that we may venture a step or two nearer the brink of the Pit than our Teachers, and take a little more Latitude than our Guides, for they are well paid for their Gravity, whilest we must be forced to be sober and austere at our own proper cost and charges. It has been an old observation, If Ministers be merry, the people will be mad; if they drink, their people will be drunk; if they argue for the lawfulness of Theatres, and other such Nurseries of good Learning, the people without scruple will frequent them: And then have a care in good earnest, lest the Stage plunder the Pulpit, and the Theatre drain the Christian Assemblies more effectually than the Conventicles.

8. *The Holy Men of those times that approach'd our Saviour, had as it were some Rays of his Divinity upon them, and their faces shone, &c.* And would he indeed have these times talk of Rays, and Beams, and Shinings of face? On purpose perhaps, because they want new Matter for Ecclesiastical Burlesque, and Canonical Drollery! One such expression as this dropt from the Tongue or Pen of a Dissenter, had been enough to equip out a whole Fleet of Friendly debates for a Summers expedition: But yet he has qualified it pretty well; they were but some Rays; and as it were some Rays: and that may mollifie as dangerous a word as this, and save the Primitive Times a Satyr.

9. *A Christian Church was then a Colledg of holy and good Men:* Incomparable proof, that all Churches were either then Cathedrals, or at least Collegiate; and truly they might have continued so still, had not Remissness of Discipline in just causes, and severity of Discipline in slight causes endangered to make them a Den of Thieves.

If the Church-doors were strictly guarded, and the Church-windows narrowly watch'd, that none might come in by the one, nor climb in by the other, that are unqualified: If Simoniacal buyers and sellers were soundly whip'd out, which have bribed their Admission by the Golden Key; and none denied entrance that claim Admission upon Christs Terms; such as can produce Testimonial Letters from a sound Faith, a id holy Conversation, the Church might still be a Colledg of good and holy Men: But if some must be forced in, in spite of their Teeth, though as unfit as Ignorance and prophaneness can make them; if like the Americans, they must be compelled to go to Heaven upon pain of death; if others be excluded by the Palizado's of Ceremonies, however meet Materials for such a constitution, never hope the Church should



should be a *Holy Colledg*, but a *Lazarbouse*; for they that are of *no Religion*, will be of *any Religion*, rather than be *undone* for being of *none*; and they that are really of *any Religion*, will endeavour to go to Heaven in *better company*.

And such were the beauties of the *Primò-primitive Confessors*: but now there is a sad Degeneracy; and that the Reader may not suspect I envy our Authors Abilities, I shall give him a taste of his Excellencies in exposing the *Modern Piety*.

1. *Now dry opinions are taken for Faith*. Oh what a lucky hint had here been for one that was so inclinable to be ingenious! For dry opinions (you know) are very combustible matter, which will catch at the smallest spark, and therefore must needs set the whole World in a flame,

But 2. *Men have been busie in making new Creeds, and have forgotten to practise the old*. Whence note for your Learning, and singular Edification, that though some mistake the Creed for a Prayer, yet it will serve without sensible error for the *Ten Commandments*: And yet perhaps practising a Creed is not so easie a matter as he may imagine: Let Men but believe their *Credenda*, and practise the *Agenda*, and they shall never be reproach'd by me for not practising their Creed, whether it be Old or New.

I am very confident the innocent Reader takes it for granted, that the Enquirer has all this while been comparing the Piety of ancient days, with that of the present, as it stands at home amongst our selves: But he's meerly gulled; for all this gawdy Eloquence has been spent upon foreign Countries. Such (says he) is the condition of the *Greek and Latin Churches*; there 'tis that they are so busie in making *New Creeds*, that they have forgot to practise the Old. Just as if one of *Jobs Messengers* should cry out in the streets, Fire! Fire! And one startled at the Alarm, asks, Where? where? Oh at the *Escorial*! at the *Escorial*! in Spain, near Madrid! Nay then, we are all well enough! I was afraid it had been my next Neighbour *Ucalegon*; and therefore, I hope, we may have time enough to remove our Goods. But, Reader, be not too secure, for the sparks are already flown over into England: If we come nearer home (says he) I doubt we shall not find things much better.

There is one peice of Justice, or charity, which I must here demand, or beg of my Reader; and 'tis This: That if the Enquirer has a priviledg to suppose his *Scarefire beyond the Seas*, I may be allowed the priviledg to suppose, that my poor Bucket was bestowed there also; and



and that though the Tragedy of *Mustapha* was acted in *London*, yet the Scene was laid at *Constantinople*.

That the British Churches were so famous for Religion in the first Times of their Plantation, I am right glad to hear, and hope the News is true; but the evidence and the consequence do both exceedingly trouble me: The former is slender, that if we touch it not very gingerly, like the Apples of *Sodom*, it will moulder into dust; and the latter is so dangerous, that it concerns him to handle it gently, lest it prick his fingers. And 1. for the Evidence: If the presence of the British Bishops at the Council of *Arles* be his best proof, it must proceed thus: The British Bishops were present at the Council. Their presence must presume their subscription to the Articles; their subscription must imply a virtual and implicit consent of the British Clergy, and then the consent of the Clergy must involve the Approbation of all the Churches. And lastly, the Churches Approbation of the Articles must infer, that they practised their Creed, and that their Lives were so eminent for Holiness, that they did as it were shine with some Rays or Beams of Divinity. And here is a Team of connected inferences, that if one fails, the conclusion will be left in the Mire. And therefore he has another proof to help it out at a standing pull: At the time of the *Nicene Council*, Britain was accounted one of the six Diocesses of the Western Empire. And then no rational creature can desire clearer demonstration, that they were eximiously Holy; for if they were of any Diocess, first, or sixth, it makes no great matter, provided it be but of the Western Empire, it will infallibly conclude their Piety, though it had been more clear in my mind, had it been a Diocess not of the Empire only, but the Church. And then 2. for the consequence, that seems very perilous; for if the presence of the British Bishops at the Council of *Arles* implies their subscription, and that subscription the consent of the Clergy, the Clergies consent, the Approbation of the People; and that infers their Holiness. Then (say some) the presence of the English Divines at the Synod of *Dort*, and their subscription of the Articles; will imply the consent of the Clergy, and the consent of the Clergy the Approbation of the English Church; and there's no remedy for it that I can see. If the presence of the one will evince the Kingdoms Sanctity, the presence and subscription of the other will much stronger evince the Kingdoms Orthodoxy; For subscription is a good step beyond bare presence, and so our Premises are stronger; and Sanctity is a good step beyond Truth in the Understanding, and so our conclusion is more modest.

We

We are now coming to lower times, to the Catholick times of Popery: and Religion holds very good still, and runs clear; but there's no help for it, he must tilt it, or it will run Drege in the Reformation.

*The Inhabitants of this Island (says he) have not been more famous for Martial Prowess, than for sincere Piety and Devotion: For Polydore Virgil, an Italian, and Erasmus a Dutchman, both of the Roman Communion, and (therefore be sure) competent Witnesses, affirm there was more true devotion and sincerity of Religion in this Church, than in any one place of the World besides: Auditum admitti, Risum teneatis? I have known a sober Horse break Bridle upon a far less provocation. We will for once, to gratifie this Enquirers longing, suppose that there was more true Piety and sincere Devotion amongst the English Papists, than among the Albigenes and Waldenses, than in Bohemia, or wherever else the Gospel had begun to dawn; but that Polydore Virgil, and Erasmus, should be competent witnesses, and therefore competent witnesses, because of the Roman Communion, does a little stumble me; and that it has ever been as the Interest, so the Religious practise of those in Communion with Rome, to magnifie those in Communion with her, and as much to depretiate the Holiness of all those that had once withdrawn themselves from her Corruptions,*

The Argument, such as it is, proceeds thus: They that were of the Roman Communion, must needs be supposed competent Witnesses of the truth of the Devotion, and sincerity of the Religion of those of the same Communion: but such, and so qualified were this Polydore Virgil, and this Erasmus, and therefore they must needs be supposed *Testes Legales*, competent Witnesses of the truth of the Devotion, and sincerity of the Religion of those of the same Communion, and such at that time was the Church of England: and the strength of the Argument depends upon some old stable Maxims, which like the *noval évocat*, are never to be denied: as that, *Ask his fellow whether he be a Thief? And Birds of a feather are impartial in blazoning one anothers vices.* But yet if he will define Piety by Superstition, and Religion by blind Zeal, and Devotion by hoodwink'd Obedience, Charity by a Merit-mongering humour, laying out it self in uncommanded Fopperies, idle Self-Macerations, Idolatrous Masses, Fool-hardy Pilgrimages, Dirges, Trentalls Obits, Requiems, and such-like Trash and Trumpery; I will not contend. Let Erasmus and his fellow Polydore pass for irrefragable Evidence, and the

the Piety of those days out-shine that of their Contemporaries and Successors amongst the reformed Christians, *Quantum imer ignes Luna minores.*

Well, but yet the Universal Pastor observed the sheep of England to bear such good Fleeces, and so patiently to submit to the Shearer, that he kept a vigilant eye over his flocks, and his Vigilancy was rewarded with the Golden Fleece. This indeed quite shames the present Age, and dazzles our eyes with the lustre of those brighter times. And here we are acquainted with two notable secrets: 1. That the Piety of the English sheep then lay very much in patiently submitting to the Shearer.

And surely were men but ingenuous to confess a know truth, they could have no cause to reproach the present Piety of the English sheep upon that account. What they could desire more of the poor sheep than the Fleece, unless they will flea of the skin, and eat the flesh. I cannot imagine, and that can be no profound policy in the Pastor for the Fleece of the living, will give more than the skin of the dead: It's much better husbandry to strip them yearly of their Coats, than once for all to cut their Throats; and it has past for wholesome Doctrine in the days of Yore, *Boni pastoris est pecus Tondere, non deglubere.*

But 2. Another deep point is this, That the vigilancy of the Pastor consists in looking strictly after the fleece of the flock. In which particular I know no reason why the vigilancy of former times should be so Idolatrously predicated above that of our own.

We are come at length to the times of the Reformation; and whilst he engages in a just and sober commendation of them, there's none shall more cheerfully keep pace with him, provided always he gallop not too fast, and ride us quite out of breath: And the Glories of our English Reformation were as followeth.

1. It was the most orderly, not brought in with tumult and sedition, as most changes are: Let God alone have the glory of so great a mercy! And such was this: though indeed the Excellency of a Reformation, lies not only, or chiefly in the still and silent manner of its Introduction, but in its Harmony with the Primitive Rule of Reformation, which is to reduce all things to their Divine Patterns and Originals: Peace is mainly valuable for purity; and the freedom from noises of Axes and Hammers in the building of Solomons Temple, was, that they might more severely attend to their Archetype. Where God gives Reformers more peace, he expects from them more purity; and if they may

may work *the safer*, he expects they should work *the better*: It were great ingratitude to God if we should account our Gospel cheap, because it came to us so: and as much vanity to boast how our Ancestors got it, unless we can produce it as pure as they left it to us peaceable.

3. *It was the most moderate and temperate.* Moderation is a virtue very much commended by those who never intend to exercise it. As an old griping Usurer commends his Coin so highly, and loves it so dearly, that he will not part with one penny. The Reformation might be moderate in a twofold Acceptation; either, first, moderate in our *departure* from Error and Corruption; or, secondly, moderate and temperate in our *approaching* to the Word of God: Now to resolve to be moderately reformed either of these ways, ought not to be Recorded amongst the Glories of a Church: There are few that would be moderately rich, moderately great; they fear no excess that way: all the danger is, lest we should be too immoderate and unreasonable in obeying Christs Commandments, and conforming to the Apostolical Churches: the measure of our love to Christ, is to love him without measure; the degree of our Obedience, is to obey in the highest degree; and the bounds of our Conformity to the Gospel, to set our selves no bounds but what Christ has set us: Gods Praise can suffer no *Hyperbole*, his Love need fear no *Paroxysm*: As he that presumes he has *Grace enough*, may do well to question whether he has *any Grace*: so he that is so confident he is *Reformed enough*, shall tempt others to suspect he is *very little Reformed*: There's more danger of being *lukewarm* in Reforming, than *scalding-hot*; and though it be easie to be *over-righteous* in imposing our own Inventions, it will be impossible to be so in imitating Gods Prescriptions: But amongst all the kinds of Moderation that were in the Reformation, one small quantity more of *Moderation towards their Brethren* would have sweetned all: and yet they say that wanted not at first, but is since much decayed. But the Moderation of the first Reformers appears,

*Self. 1.* In that they did not purge out the good, because it had been formerly abused, as the humour of some is. This indeed argued their singular prudence, and discerning Spirit: But yet there are some things not evil in themselves, but made so by abuse. which without imputation of Humorists they might have purged out. And this was *Hezekiah's* humour (if it must be so called). who made the Brazen Serpent a *Nebuchadnezzar*; and scarcely that, when once it had

been abus'd to Idolatry, which yet had more to plead for it self, than those good things, of which our Enquirer is so tender; I mean the Signature of an old *Fus Divinum*.

Whatever is good in it self, or made so by Divine positive Law, and shall afterwards be abus'd to superstitious ends and uses, we must take some pains to scow off the filth, and file away the rust, and to wash away the soil that it has contracted, and to vindicate it to its Native beauty and integrity: but for the inventions of men, I know no such service we owe them, to lie always scrubbing and scowring, and rinsing; and when all's done, their obstinate and inveterate Leprosie, like that of Gebazi, will never be fetch'd out: And this was the humour too of Bishop Andrews, Sermon on Phil. 2. 20. *Whatsoever is taken up at the injunction of man, when it is drawn into superstition, comes under the compass of the Brazen Serpent, and is to be abolished.* And the Catholick Moderator, who was a greater friend to Moderation, than Reformation, was partly of this humour too: When the occasion of a Humane Constitution ceases, and the abuses remain so great, it's no time to wink at them any longer. To stand pecking at abuses, which have eaten themselves into the substance of an old custom, is like the endless labour of weeding Ivy out of an old rotten Wall, the only way is to dig down the Wall it self: Nay the great Legislator of the Jews, commanded them utterly to abolish all the Instruments and Utensils of Idolatry, and not to dally in Lopping, and Pruning, but to chop them up by the Roots: Thus Lev. 18. 3. *After the doing of the land of Egypt ye shall not do, and after the doings of the land of Canaan ye shall not do, neither shall ye walk after their Ordinances; ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances.* And whether he will call this a humour, or no, I know not. But this I know, *R. Moses, Ben. Maimon*, with whom agree no small Names, assures us, that this was one reason of many Negative Precepts given to the Jews, as not to Round the corners of their Beards; not to wear a garment of Linscy-woolsey; nor to sow their ground with divers seeds; nor to eat the fruit of their trees for the three first years, &c. Namely, that they might not symbolize with the Idolatrous Nations. Nay further, if this was a humour, the Church of England is not ashamed, was not ashamed to own her self of it, in her discourse prefix'd to the Liturgy: *The most weighty cause of the abolishment of certain Ceremonies was their abuse:* She knew well, that what was bred in the bone, would never be got out of the flesh; that which was naught in the Egg, will never be good in the Bird: It's not washing, but burning, that must cleanse

cleanse the garment spotted with the flesh. And therefore she routed whole Legions of these Pompous Trinkets, and had doubtless scattered the reserves, and brought up her practise to her own rule, had not some tender-hearted moderate persons, stood by wringing their hands, and weeping for Tammuz; Oh deal gently, deal gently with the poor distressed Ceremonies for their Fathers sake.

sect. 2. Another Specimen of their Moderation is, That they did not abolish a venerable Order, or Office in the Church, for the ill manners of them that bore it. What venerable Order, or Office this should be, because he is not so open-hearted as to acquaint us, I have something else to do with my Conjectures, than to throw 'em away upon such desperate uncertainties: If it was an Order of Christs institution, the ill manners of those that bore it, might well warrant the thrusting them out of the Office, but not the Office out of the Church: But if it could not justly plead his Authority, no pretence of usefulness to some imaginary ends of I know not what Unity and Order, will conciliate to it the Honourable Epithete of *Venerable*, or secure its station in the Church of Christ: as Christ, the only Lawgiver of his Church has made abundant provision of *Offices* and *Ordinances* in his Church, to suit and answer all the necessities of Believers; so of *Officers* too, to discharge those *Offices*, and administer those *Ordinances*; and there is no need of mens over-officiousness to supply his pretended defects either in the one kind, or in the other. Indeed we pray, that it would please the Lord of the harvest to thrust in more labourers for number, but not for kind: They who shall assume to themselves a power to create new *Offices*, may by parity of reason claim an authority to erect new *Officers*: for it's a thousand pities, that any but humane *Officers* should be put to the toyl to celebrate humane *Ordinances*; or that any of *Christs Ministers* should be put to the drudgery to administer any but *Christs own Ordinances*; for indeed they have their hands full of work enjoyned them by their Lord and Master, and can neither spare time nor strength supernumerary to expend in superfluous exercises. As Christ has annex'd no promise of his presence to any but his own servants, so no promise of success to any but his own services: He that runs upon Christs errand, his Master will bear his charges: he that runs upon his own head, or the heads of others, for ought I know must bear his own: It's a scandalous impeachment of the unquestionable love Christ always bore to his Church, once to imagine that he has not either provided work enough for his *Labourers*, or that he has not apportioned *Labourers* enough for his work.

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The same reproach will it be to *his absolute Sovereignty* over the Church, either to pretend to supply his defects and shortnesses, or to institute new Officers, and Offices, which plainly imply it.

If it were only *vitium personæ*, the removing the scandalous, had been a Plaster broad enough for the wound: but if it proves *vitium rei*, you may purge all the Officers into their Graves before you can purge away the evil of the Office, which like Tartar, is so baked and crusted to the sides of the Vessel, that till you knock off the Hoops, and take the frame in peices, no Art of Man will free the Cask from a tang, at least of the old mustiness.

*Sect. 3.* They were not of opinion; that the Church could not arrive at Primitive Purity, unless it were reduced to Primitive Poverty: Purity and Poverty, I must needs say, do Rhime so sweetly, that no wise Man would have lost the Melodious Chime of two such Harmonious words for a small matter: But what if the Church never propounded the Primitive Purity for her Pattern? If she did, she has run all the things in Controversie out of distance; yet this I will say, That if ever the Church be reduced to Primitive Purity, without some such humbling Providence, and refining Dispensation, which purged the Primitive Christians from their dross, or the effusion of such measures of Grace, Humility, Self-denial, Condescension. as may answer Primitive Poverty, very wise men, and her very good friends are much mistaken.

*Sect. 4.* Their Moderation appears in this: That though they found some Ceremonies then used that were superstitious and dangerous, and thought too many burdensome, yet concluded not all decency in the service of God was Popish. It had been a conclusion wild to Frensie, to infer that all decency was Popish, because some Ceremonies were superstitious: Nay, though they all were so, and had accordingly been discarded: But this had been a sober and moderate conclusion, That because all Popish Ceremonies were superstitious and dangerous, the worship of God might be decent without them: Gods service was decent before they were born, and would be so again, if they were all in their Graves, as well as dead and rotten. And if those decent Ceremonies had a decent Burial, it were an Honour as great as those of a Nobler Extract, I mean Divine Ceremonies, had bestowed on them: I would seriously enquire of our serious Enquirer: 1. If some Ceremonies were abolished, because they were superstitious, and therefore dangerous, why all the rest were not served with the same sawce, that were equally, or more superstitious, and therefore  
more



more dangerous? I think its demonstrable. that all the Superstition that ever stuck to *Holy Water, Cream, Salt, Spittle, Oyl*, was Innocency to that horrid abuse of the *Sign of the Cross*. But 2. if the Superstitions of the remaining Ceremonies were capable of separation from them, why might not a little Oyl and Elbow-grease have been bestowed on the rest, and their Lives saved? It seems most of the Ceremonies were knock'd oth' head, because they would not go to the charge of Rearing them. 3. If many Ceremonies were a burden, whether were not *half of that many, half as great a burden*, and so *pro rata*? And if so, where was the Churches Commission to impose any *unnecessary* burden upon the necks of the Disciples? 4. If some of the old superstitious Ceremonies (when well scraped and wiped) were left for decency and comeliness in the Worship, why were not the rest scummer'd up, that the Worship might be *more decent*? For if *two or three* innocent Ceremonies will add a Decency, *two or three* hundred would have burnish'd it to such a lustre, as must have either ravish'd or blinded the eyes of all Beholders? 5. Who shall infallibly assure us *just how few* will be *no burden*, and the imposing of them *no sin*? and yet *one more* shall make them all burdensome, and so the imposition of them to become *sinful*? or *just how many* to an Unite will render the Worship *decent*, and the adding of *one more* render all deformed? If the Church, then why might not the Church of *Rome* in her days have determined the question? Especially seeing that of all pretenders, she alone challenges an Infallibility, which is the most considerable thing in this case, when the Church must carry her hand even, and cut by a thred, between decency and indecency; A burden, and no burden? 6. If the Church has a power to impose a load (though a *lesser load*), has she a power to communicate *strength*, though it be but *little strength*, to bear that *little*? Especially seeing the burden here must not lie on the *back*, but the *heart*; not on the *shoulders*, but the *conscience*: She that pleads an Authority to *institute*, can she produce a power to *bless what* she institutes to any spiritual end? This encouragement we have from Christ, whose Prerogative it is to *impose*; that he will give grace to bear what he imposes, and thereby make his yoke *easy*, and his burden *light*. *Qui mihi est Oneris Autor, idem erit Administrationis Adjutor*, said Leo: And so *Austin*. *Da quod jubes, & jube quod vis*. If any Church could incline the heart towards her Testimonies, or give a heart to keep her Statutes, judgments and Commandments, and do them, or make her



her commandments not greivous: Let her multiply Ceremonies till she is weary, and spare not; let her use her discretion, and we shall use nothing but submission: but this dead weight sinks our spirits quite. 7 Whether is not such an assuming-power exceeding dangerous in its consequences? for upon this Principle the Church may impose a round thousand of Ceremonies, if she will say, and think them decent, and the Crow thinks all her young ones white, and all are fond of the Brats of their brains, as well as the Issue of their bodies; yes, and ten thousand more, if she will but decree they are not burdensome: which she is the less a competent Judge of, because Superiors who command, do not feel that load which Inferiors who must obey, do groan under. So much of the Moderation of the Reformation.

3. The English Reformation was the most perfect and compleat in its kind. The perfection and compleatness of a Reformation, is to be taken from its agreement with its Rule and Idea, which (say we) is the Word of God; and to this we do unmovably adhere, till we have good security that they have found out a better: All perfection with us, is but defection; and all compleatness, fancy, which is not measured by that Rule: It will therefore be the great Glory of the English Reformation to acquit it self well in this point, wherein our Enquirer will endeavour our satisfaction.

1. For Doctrine. This Church retains (says he) the most Ancient Doctrine, and soundest Confession of Faith founded upon the H. Scripture: That the H. Scriptures are the foundation of Faith, we gladly hear some intimation of, and shall lay up the concession against another time; whether the Church has attended to this Rule in her Doctrinals, belongs to another Discourse.

2. For Government; He tells us, The English Reformation retains the most Primitive Church-Government. These things are wisely and warily pen'd (thought I;) A Scripture Creed, and a Primitive Church-Government! Confession founded on H. Scriptures, and Government founded on a word called Primitive; why should we not have a confession founded on something else than Scripture, as well as a Government? Or why not a Church-Government founded on the Scripture, as well as the Doctrine? So that he has provided well for the Doctrine; but for the Government, it may sink or swim for any relief it can expect from our Enquirer, except a hard word will do it, Primitive Antiquity is one of those stulta Amuleta quæ Controversia collo appenduntur ut Armilla Maleficarum; Potent Charms, and Pom-

pous Enchantments not to cure, but conjure down a Controversie for since *Primitive* may be taken in a Latitude of three, four, five, or (for time of need) six hundred years after Christ, it would be very hard if any Crotchet, Humour, and Fancy had not set up for itself in that time, which shall be enough to entitle it to the Warrantie of the Primitive times: Let him therefore prove it *Scriptural*, and *se jure Divino*, and he has said more to me, than if he had run up its Pedigree through a Dozen or more Centuries: But is not this short word [the most Primitive Church-Government] a foundation too narrow for that high Boast? p. 2. *That our Church is of a sound and healthful constitution, I think I have sufficiently, though briefly manifested in the Introduction.* Briefly and sufficiently! The two most desirable qualifications in Argument and Evidence that may be! and surely it must be brief enough, which is comprehended in this one Sentence: *The English Reformation retains the most Primitive Church-Government*; but whether it be *sufficient or no*, let the Reader look to that.

3. For the Liturgy, *That is* (as he thinks) *the best accomodate to reconcile and unite mens devotions.* And how well it has answered its end, and the design of its Institution, I shall say the less, because others will say the more; some say it has *distracted more devotions than ever it united*: And others, That it has accommodated them as much as could be expected from a humane contrivance, that had no more of Christs Authority for its institution, and therefore could expect no more of *his blessing* for the success. That this, or any other Liturgy was an expedient appointed by Christ to *unite mens devotions*, he may explain, and attempt the proof of at his best leisure: But that Christ has not been wanting to his Church, in leaving her the proper and sufficient means for the advancing of devotions, and uniting affections, we are satisfied, and so fully contented, that we shall seek no further.

That Protestants in the days of Edw. VI. did Rejoice in the Liturgie, Dissenters will not deny: An English Liturgie left free, was better than a Latin Mass; Half a Loaf, was much better than no Bread. To them who had been in such Darkness and bondage, any Light, any Liberty were most grateful. The first Original of Liturgies (as is express'd in the Preface to our own) was, that the whole Bible should be read over (or the greatest part of it) once every Year; intending thereby, that the Clergy, and especially such as were Ministers of the Congregation, should by often reading, and meditation of Gods Word, be stirred

up to Godliness themselves. — And further, that the people, by daily hearing of the Holy Scriptures read in the Church, should continually profit more in the Knowledge of God ; — But these many years past, this Godly and Decent Order of the Ancient Fathers hath been so alter'd, broken, neglected, by planting in uncertain Stories, Legends, Responds, Verses, vain Repetitions, Commemorations, and Synodals, that, &c. And moreover, whereas St. Paul would have such Language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same : The Service in this Church of England hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understood not, so that they have heard with their Ears only, and their Heart, Spirit, and Mind have not been edified thereby. From hence we are evidently taught, First, That the true Original of Liturgies was only an Order for the Methodical Reading of the Scriptures for the benefit of an ignorant Clergy, and sottish People. And Secondly, That that wherein the Reformers gloried to have out-done Popery, and edified the people, was, that they had procured them their Worship in a Language understood.

When therefore I hear these popular Harangues ; *How happy this Church and Nation was in Edw. VI. days ; in what Glory and Majesty the Prince Reigned ; in what Peace and Concord the Subjects lived ; how Devout and pious an Age that was ;* I am ready to think, that as the Graves of Patients do hide the faults of Physicians ; so the follies and vanities of those days are buried in their own Graves too : For Dr. Heylin had almost perswaded me, That the death of that Prince was none of the infelicities of the Church of England ! But our Enquirer has set him right again ; and his days were the Golden Age of Reformation, his Reign the glorious pattern of Peace and Concord, and so shall continue, till the next occasion those men have to reproach the Reformation ; and then *Edw. VI. days* shall be an *Infelicity* again, and as great a prejudice to Religion as ever. So easie it is for a cunning Orator with his orient Colours, to fill up the wrinkles of a furrow'd Face, and again to deform the most beauteous complexion, just as it pleases Master Painter.

The total sum of all, is thus much : The Primitive times were glorious for Piety ; in *Polydore Virgil's* days, and those of Popery, there was a great deal of *sincere Devotion*. In the beginning of the Reformation, affairs were in an excellent posture ; but *now* all's degenerated, and a Lukewarm Neutrality, and Lazy Indifferency, has overspread the Face, and crept over the Heart of Religion. And what should be the matter ? What is the Reason of this sad change ? Why ! Men are

are not so fond of Ceremonies as they used to be, and people have resolved against the building of Churches, and endowing them.

But let us hear him *Lament the change*: All *Zeal* then, All *Indifference* now. Then all *Harmony*, now all *Discord*. Then the *Society of the Church* was so *venerable*, that to be cast out by *Excommunication*, was as dreadful as to be *Thunder-smitten*: But now it's become a matter of some mens ambition to be cast out. Then few, or none, but frequented the church; now the Church is become the *Conventicle*, and the *Conventicle* the church, as to frequency. Then the *Liturgy* and publick *Prayers* were counted a principal part of Gods *Worship*; now they are nothing without a *Sermon*. Then there were few things that were scrupled; but now it's become the great point of *Sanctity* to scruple every thing. It will be time for me, and the Reader, to take our leave of this learned Introduction, when we have observed and returned a few things. 1. That the true Reason why there is more discord now than at that time. is, because there are more difficult terms of *Peace and Concord*. Several things were then in use which were not impo'd: Many were permitted to discharge their Ministerial Functions without subscription to the new terms and conditions of *Communion*. It was pretty well in *Queen Elizabeths* Reign. before *A. B. Whitgift* could strain conformity to its height; and yet they are now screwed much higher. Restore *Indifferent things* to their *Ancient Liberty*, and we shall soon arrive at our *Ancient Amity*. 2. That *Excommunication* has so much lost its former Authority upon the Conscience, and become so like a *Brutum Fulmen*, is to be imputed to these Reasons; 1. Because that *Thunderbolt* is darted out for meer trifles; some have been delivered over to Satan for a Groat. Now it's a sure *Maxime*, That nothing will bring a Law sooner into disuse and contempt, than the disproportion of the penalty to the Offence. It will be difficult to perswade weak understandings, that that can be of God which has but one sort of punishment for all sorts of Crimes, and the same rigour for *Vertues* as for *Vices*; to be delivered up for a penny, exposes to the same inconvenience as if it were a pound; and it shall fare as ill with him that scruples at a Ceremony. as with him that commits Whoredom, and some say, the former has more evil in it than the latter, though you throw in Drunkenness, Swearing, and half a dozen more such into the reckoning. 2. It has been made an Engine to gratifie some mens passions, and exonerate their spleen upon the Innocent and nothing renders *Jupiters Thunder* more despicable, than when the wretched *Salmonius* shall dare to imitate it. 3. It has been so frequently

Quently practised in pecuniary matters, that men discern it not to be a spiritual weapon: Money has been a Lock to shut men out of Heaven, and a Key to let them in again. 4. They that have been ejected by that *Cherem*, find no evil consequences in their ejected state. In the Primitive times it was therefore terrible, because Christ abetted his own Ordinance, administered for his own spiritual ends, in his own regular way; but now men dare not trust Christ with his own Work, but have supplied his vengeance with a *Significavit*, a *Writ de Excommunicato Capiendo*, delivering men over to the Sheriff, whom thereby they call the Devil by craft; but otherwise the Excommunicated person *eats his Bread, and Drinks his Wine with a cheerful heart, because the Lord has accepted him.* 3. That so few frequent the Church is, because they have either been scoffed, or railed, or beaten out of doors, or barred out by conditions not comporting with Scripture Rule or Warrant. Men know that Christ must be their Judge, to him they must give an account of their Souls, and Worship, in the great day; and therefore they are willing to worship God according to his Will revealed in his Sacred Word, unless any can give them Counter-security to save harmless and indemnify them before his dreadful Tribunal: And if they must suffer for such resolved adherence to a Scripture Religion, they have only this humbly to reply, *Da veniam Imperator, Tu Carcerem, Ille Gehennam. Christ threatens a Hell; the Law only menaces a Gaol.* 4. That the Liturgy was then counted a principal part of Gods Worship, we cannot help: We judge, that none but God can make the least, much less a principal part of Gods Worship; God only knows which way he will be worshipped with acceptance: And it is our great happiness, that he has acquainted us with that Will of his in his Word, to which we apply our selves for our Directory, and are not solicitous about Apocryphal Rubricks. *As to matters concerning Religion, Nature reacheth no further than the obligation to the Duty; but leaves the particular determination of the manner of obedience to Divine positive Laws:* So we are instructed from the Author of *Origines Sacrae*, p. 171. 5. That it is now become the great point of Sanctity to scruple every thing, was not spoken with that regard to Honesty and Truth, as might have been expected from a Compassionate Enquirer. They scruple being holier than Christ has commanded them; wiser in matters of Religious Worship than the Scriptures are able to make them. They scruple giving up their Consciences to those whom they see no great reason to trust, till better evidence be given how they regard their own: They scruple

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all retreats in Reformation, and all retrograde motions towards Evangelical perfection and purity ; and they with our Enquirer would scruple a little more this overlasting, *That it's an Essential part of some mens Religion to be censorious ; and a great point of sanctity to scruple every thing.* Let him then continue to lament the change, and we will pray that God will make a more through change, reducing Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, to the Word of God, the only Rule of Reformation.

## PART I.

### CHAP. I.

*A Sober Enquiry into the Apocryphal Causes of Non-conformity, pretended by the serious Enquirer : St. Augustin, and the Synod of Dort vindicated ; the Articles of the Church of England cleared. The Learning, Preaching, and Conversations of the N. C. modestly justified, against the scandalous Reflections of the pretended Compassionate Enquirer ; but without Recrimination.*

**A**FTER a very short Epistle. (or to speak Canonically, that which stands instead of the Epistle) to very little, and a tedious Introduction to much less purpose, the Enquirer falls full drive upon the Causes of the separation from the English Reformed Church. In imitation of the French Embassadors Musicians, who would needs give the Grand Seignior a fit of Mirsh, but were so cruelly tedious in tuning their Fiddles, that the Sultans Patience was quite worn out, and he could not be perswaded to hear the first Lesson.

Now the Causes are either *Apocryphal and pretended*, or *Canonical and Real* ; and it's a wonder to me, when his Invention was once broached, that he did not feign this for another Cause of separation,

that such. Heterogeneous Causes should be bound up together in the same Volume and Cover.

For these Apocrip. al Causes, let it not beget another scruple in your captious H ads. whether they are pretended by Dissenters, or only pretended by *this Enquirer*, to be amongst their pretences; for it will come all to one, there being some collateral matters, which it shall go hard but he will entice or force into the Discourse, or else the Reader might have sung whoop *Barnaby!* and Retreated to his Recreations the longest Holy-day in the Year.

1. The very first of these pretended Causes, is, *some Blame they lay upon the Doctrine of the Church; and the main (if not the only) thing excepted against in this kind is, That the Thirty nine Articles are not so punctual in defining the five Points debated in the Synod of Dort as they could wish.* Just as your common Hackney Versifiers, or Water-Poets, make one Verse for the Reason, and the other for the Rhime sake; so was this Objection mounted against the Doctrine of the Church for the sake of his precious Answers, wherein he will find or make as handsom an occasion, as impertinency will admit to vilifie St. Austin, and the Synod of Dort.

It will be extremely difficult to give our Enquirer a satisfactory Answer in this Point. Shall we say, This is not the main thing in the Articles excepted against by Dissenters? He will readily reply, however then you tacitly grant, that this is one of your little Cavils. Shall we say, This is not the only thing they scruple? he will return nimb'y, Then it seems you confess this to be one, though not the only thing you boggle at. Really if I knew how to content him, I would do it; and the best expedient that offers it self at present, is this Answer: 1. That the Church has other Doctrines, not contained in the 39 Articles, imposed on the Faith of Subscribers; and perhaps the scruple may lye against them. 2. That the 39 Articles contain other Doctrines, besides those relating to the five Points debated at the Synod of Dort; as that of Art. 20, The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies. And that of Art. 34, Every Particular or National Church, hath Authority to Ordain, Change and Abolish Ceremonies or Rites of the Church, ordained only by Mans Authority. And what now if the quarrel should lie against one of those? And I am the rather induced to suspect they may hesitate in these particulars, because I have heard some of them privately Speak, and seen others publickly Print, that though they can practise such things which being in their own natures indifferent, remain under all their con-

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current circumstances lawful; yet they cannot find where the Church has any commission to impose them: They can assert, and use their *Christian Liberty*, and yet cannot subscribe to the *Doctrine of the Churches Power* to take it away. 3. That the most rigid Calvinists do not scruple Subscription to the Articles, so far as they relate to the Quinquarticular Controversies: and for a clear experiment herein, for once let the Church make *those Articles only*, the *single Rail about the Communion-Table*, and we shall soon see such multitudes of Dissenters crowd into the Constitution, that she will hardly find two Benefices a piece for them.

It's my greater admiration, that they who deny *Particular Election*, *Original sin*, the interest of Christs death in *Reconciling God to us*: that they who assert *Justification by our own Works*, *Free-will*, &c. can subscribe them: and indeed it seems they swallow'd them with some Reluctancy, and are now reaching and straining with many a sower face, to disgorge, not the *Bait of the Benefice*, which is infinitely sweet: but the *Hook of the Article*, which is unmercifully sharp.

This pretended Pretence then might safely have been forborn, but that the Lapwing thinks it advisable to raise a huge cry, *where 'tis not*, that we may not search where *really it is*: to make a clamping about the Non-causes to divert our Enquirers from the true and proper causes of Non-conformity: Like the ingenious policy of the Thief, that being arraigned for a *Horse*, freely confessed the stealing of a *Bridle*, but prudently concealed it was upon the *Horses Head*.

But (says our Enquirer) *though this neither needs nor deserves an Answer*, yet I shall reply two things to it: That is, he will give us two needless Answers to one needless Objection,

1. The sum of the former needless Answer is thus much, *Common Arts and Sciences*, which depend upon *Humane Wit and Invention*, are capable of daily improvements; but *Christianity* depending solely upon *Divine Revelation*, can admit of no new discoveries. The *busie Wit of Man* may perplex, but it can never bring to light any new thing; for if we admit of any *New Revelations*, we lose the *Old*, and our Religion together; we accuse our Saviour, and his Apostles, as if they had not sufficiently revealed Gods mind to the World; and we incur *St. Paul's Anathema* which he denounces against him, (*whoever it shall be*, nay if an *Angel from Heaven*) that shall Preach any other Doctrine than what had been received.

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d The Enquirer may call this a *needless Answer* (for who shall hinder him from calling *his own* what he pleases) but I assure him it contains a great deal of needful Truth, which had he like a good Husband improved. the rest of his Book had been more needless than this Answer: *Needless* we confess it to be as to the *Objection*, which was it self *needless*, but not so for his own *Confutation*; for thus the Dissenters will come over him: *If neither time nor the wit of Man can make any new discoveries in Christianity*; then the Pope, who like another *Columbus*, or *Americus*, has made great and new discoveries in the *Terra Incognita* of Tradition and Ceremonies, must either be a God, or a Devil. That the Liturgy was a *principal part of Gods worship*, he has told us in the Introduction; that it was discovered from the beginning, and not by latter Adventurers, he will be fore put to it to prove, for all the *musty Fragments* of *St. James's Liturgy*: That it was not part of the Wisdom of Christ, or his Apostles, we are well enough satisfied: That there was Wit and Invention in it, we confess: all the Question is, whose Wit should have the glory of the Invention? Again! *If to admit new Revelations be to lose the old, and our Religion together*: Let us make a short Query upon't, whether to admit of new Ordinances and Constitutions, be not to lose the old, and our Religion together? That is, whether Gospel-Institutions be not exclusive of new ones, as well as Gospel-Revelations? And why we may not expect a new *Credimus*, as well as a new *Mandamus*? New Revelations, as well as new Injunctions? A new Prophet of the Church seems to me as necessary as a new King over the Church, and a new High-Priest as needful as either: And I proceed upon this Principle, That the Law of Christ was as perfect as his Discoveries: He has told us as fully and clearly what we should do, as what we should believe: He that may invade the Royal Office, upon pretence there are not Laws enough for the Government of the Church, may with equal appearance of Reason invade the Prophetick Office too, upon pretence there are not Revelations enough for its instruction: And therefore the vigilant universal Pastor has found it as necessary to supply the defect of Revelations by his own Traditions, as the nakedness of Worship by decent Ceremonies.

As Jesus Christ vindicated the moral Law from the false glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, so he superadded a ceremonial Law, depending meerly upon his own fulness of Power and Authority; now what right any can pretend, to add new particulars to his ceremoni-

*al Law*, which they may not also pretend to add to his *Moral Law*, I cannot Divine : And therefore one of our Enquirers great Friends, who had his Eyes in his Head, and saw farther into these matters than his poor Neighbours, was constrained to assert a power that had lain dormant somewhere, of adding *new particulars to the Divine Law*.

But further, *If new Revelations do accuse our Saviour and his Apostles, as if they had not sufficiently revealed Gods mind to the World* : Then new ways of teaching Gods mind, new invented Symbolical Ceremonies will accuse him and them of the same culpable failure in not discharging those Offices committed by God to a Mediator, and by him to his Apostles.

And in short ; *If we incur St. Paul's Anathema, which he denounces against him that shall preach any other Doctrine than what he has received* : Then they will do well to get out of the way of that Curse who Preach this Doctrine, The Church has power to decree *Rites and Ceremonies* ; Unless they be sure they have received it from Christ : for its but ill venturing to stand in the way of an Angel with a drawn Sword ; more terrible than which is one of the Scriptures Anathema's : Some will ask where , and when, and from whom the Church received that *Doctrine* which some Preach, viz. *A Power to impose Mystical and Symbolical Ceremonies, as the Terms of communion with a Church* ; but I shall only say, that our compassionate Enquirer will need a most compassionate Reader, upon these two Accounts : First, that he makes an *Objection* for Dissenters, which is their Answer : And Secondly, that he gives an *Answer to that Objection*, which is their *very Objection* ; but yet we have not heard the Conclusion.

The consequence (says he) of these premises is ; That the elder any *Doctrine of Christianity* can be proved to be, it must needs be truer ; and he that talks of a more clear Light of the latter Times, and clearer discoveries in Religion, talks as idly as he that should affirm he could discern things better at a miles distance, than a Man that bath as good an Eye as himself, and yet stood close by the Object. This is that needless Conclusion drawn out of his needless premises ; and having discovered the weakness of the former, I might leave him at his leisure to deny his own Conclusion ; but yet I shall give him some Items about that also. And 1. It's a crude unconcocted Notion, that the elder any *Doctrine of Christianity* is, the truer it is : For it was a Truth that Christ was Born, before it was that he was crucified ; and yet the former Article,

ticle, that he was *born of the Virgin Mary*, is no truer, than that he was *Crucified, Dead, and Buried*: The Truth of the Doctrine depends not upon its *Antiquity* or *Seniority*, but upon the *infallibility of the Revealer*, *quo ad nos*, and upon the *close connexion of the Terms*, in it self, whether a Truth was revealed by Christ, or his Apostles immediately inspired, all are of equal Truth in themselves, and equal Authority as to us; that is, the lateness of the Revelation will breed no difference. 2. The Enquirer might have informed himself, that there is a double Light, an *Objective*, and *Subjective Light*: The former is the discovery of the *Thing it self*, the latter is the *enlightning of the Faculty*: It's true there is, there can be no *new Objective Light* rationally expected: In this sense all *new Lights* are but *old Darkneses*; but yet there may be *more Subjective Light*, or a greater discovery made to us of what God has discovered in his Word: the Papists lock'd up our Bibles in the Latin Tongue, and kept the Key of knowledg in their Pockets: God by his gracious Providence in the Reformation, has taken off the Embargo and restraint that was upon knowledg, and great Light is sprung in amongst us; we say not God has put more Books, or Chapters, or Verses into the Bibles, but that he has given us more light in our minds; he has not revealed *new Truths*, but given us advantage to discover the old, Thus the Learned *Stillingsfleet* somewhere expresses himself, *the common way of the Spirits illuminating the minds of Believers, is by enlightning the Faculty, not by proposition of new Objects*: A Man then may talk of more Light in these latter Times, and yet not talk idly; if by more Light he intends no more than a clearer understanding of Gods mind and Will revealed in his Word; and a Man may talk of more Light in these latter Times, and talk very idly; if thereby he means, more Revelations of Gods mind and will to supply the defects of the Scripture; but yet none talk so idly, as the Rhetorical Men, whose Premises speak against *new Objective Light*, and their conclusion against *new Subjective Light*, If Subjective Light be not capable of growth, if it does not *recipere magis & minus*: Let him give me a Reason why the Churches Articles of 1571, do clear up the Doctrine more darkly and imperfectly laid down in the days of Edward VI. Refined Silver is more clear than the same Metal in the Oare, and yet there is no more Metal. But if it be capable of growth and increase, what an idle flourish is his Similitude of a Mans seeing better at a distance, than he that stands close by the Object: For if we have got no further light into the Scriptures by all the Advantages

Advantages which Merciful Providence has furnish'd us with above the darker times of Popery, they were very ill bestowed upon us; and he that would repay him in his own Coyn might tell him; That a Man may possibly stand too near the Object, as well as too far off; and a Dwarf upon a Gyants Shoulders may see further than the Giant himself.

What he has hitherto philosophiz'd upon, has been little to our Edification; nor had we been troubled with this first Mess, but for the sake of that which is now to be served up in the second Course: and that is, a piece of Revenge that he will take upon St. Augustin, and the Synod of Dort.

1. And first, here's a heavy charge drawn up against one Augustin, of whom I presume the Reader may have heard at one time or other some mention made. Now this Augustin (or rather Austin: for his Name, as well as his Fame suffers a Syncope) has been formerly a person in great danger of incurring that Curse denounced against those of whom all Men speak well, till of late some Charitable Divines, loath to let a poor Man lie in Purgatory from Age to Age, when a few bad words would release him, took some pity on him: And one of his best Friends in this Nation is this Compassionate Enquirer, who informs us, That no Father, or Writer, Greek or Latin, before this Austins time, agreed in Doctrine with the Synod of Dort, which is so notoriously plain that it cannot be deny'd. And if he agrees therewith, yet it's certain that in so doing he disagrees as much with himself as with us of our Church: That he was indeed a devout Man, but his Piety was far more commendable than his Reason: and that being hard put to it by the Manichees on the one hand, and the Pelagians on the other, he was not able to extricate himself, and that he was rather forced into his opinion, than made choice of it.

He that shall thus confidently dare to censure that worthy Father, must be presumed to have read over his Voluminous Writings, with all those of Ancient Writers before him, both Grek and Latin, to a Man, to a Sentence, which might sufficiently have proclaimed his Learning, and recommended him to a Patron, (one would think) though he had never reproached that Father himself: Many a poor Hungry Man have I known in my little time, that has scribbled one piece after another, railing at the Pope, which yet never turned to such Account, as half a score Lines smartly penn'd against this great Sinner Austin. And yet for all these Insinuations of Industry in Reading, and Acuteness of piercing Wit, in hunting and tracing the poor

Man

Man through all the windings and turnings of his self-perplexing Contradictions; it's our meer good nature if we will believe that ever he saw any more than the *back-side* of St. *Austins* Works, for indeed all this may be no more than an ingenious Paraphrase of their great *Grotius*, who thus spends his Judgment upon him; *Discufs.* p. 97. "Ut dicam quod sentio puto *Augustinum* adeo non cum prioribus, ne secum quidem per omnia posse conciliari. Ita contranitendi studio, se in illas Ambages induxit ut non invenerit, quâ se extricaret; Paucis Scripturæ Adductus Locis, quæ facilitè commodam interpretationem recipiunt, aliis locis, & pluribus, & clarioribus, per quæ Deus significatur omnium salutem velle, interpretationes det violentas, & nunc has, nunc illas, incertus quò se vertat; ut dicam aliquid amplius fuit utilis *Augustinus* ad monita danda piæ vitæ, ad interpretandas Sacras Scripturas satis in foelix."

When I first read this dismal charge against *Austin*, it minded me of our common forms of Indictments against *Breakers of the Peace*; how they did *Vi & Armis, with Bills, and Staves, and Swords, and Guns, make an Assault and Battery*, when it may be all the out-cry is for no worse than a *Fillip*, or a sorry *Box oib' Ear*.

But what will the Reader say, if all this Bluster and Clamour which our Enquirer has borrowed upon *Grotius* his words, and the Publick Faith, be no more than what *Grotius* himself has borrowed from the *Pelagians*, who were bound in their own defence to reproach his Person, before whose Arguments they durst not stand; and who being the great oppugners of the grace of God, must needs hate him who was its great Propugnator. I read indeed in *Marius Mercator*. p. 103. That *Theodorus*, Bishop of *Mopsuestia*, the Dad of the *Pelagians*, did at this rate nibble at *Austins* Learning. "Sed nihil illorum perspicere potuit, Mirabilis peccati Originalis Assertor, quippe qui in Divinis Scripturis nequaquam fuerit exercitatus, nec ab Infantiâ, juxta B. *Pauli* vocem Sacras didicerit Literas; sed sive de Scripturæ sensibus, sive de Dogmate sæpius Declamans, multa frequenter inepta, propriè communiterve de ipsis Scripturis, Dogmatibusque plurimis impudenter depromsit. But this wonderful maintainer of Original Sin, (*Austin*) could see none of all these Things; being a Person not at all exercised in the H. Scriptures; Nor one that had (according to St. *Pauls* saying) learn'd the Scripture from his childhood; but frequently Declaiming whether of the meaning of the Scriptures, or of some Opinion, he oftentimes utters many fooleries,

at all adventures, *Habnab*, concerning the Scriptures, and many points of Doctrine. But yet let us hear the Indictment against *Austin*, in its several Branches.

*Sett.* 1. One Branch of the charge is, That he was a Novelist in the weightiest Points of Religion. No one Father, or Writer, Greek or Latine, before his time agreed with him. Adeo non cum prioribus posse conciliari: And this is so plain, that it needs no proof, further than the bare say-so of *Grotius*; nor can it be denied. There's your Charge! There's your Evidence! These are indeed big words, utter'd with that confidence which men commonly assume that would be believed in an unproved falshood; for I will suppose *Vincentius Lirinensis*, that *Matheus Hæreticorum*, to have understood the Sentiments of former Ages, as well as this Enquirer, or *Hugh Grotius*. Now he tells us cap. 34. *adversus hæretic.* Quis unquam ante Prophanum illum Pelagium tantam virtutem Liberi presumpsit Arbitrii, ut hoc in bonis Rebus per Actus singulos adjuvandum, necessarium Dei gratiam non putaret? Quis ante prodigiosum discipulum ejus Cælestium, Reatu prævaricationis Adæ, omne genus Humanum adstrictum negaret? "Who ever before that prophane wretch *Pelagius*, ever presumed the power of free-will to be so great, as not to judg the Grace of God necessary to help in all good things, even in every particular Act? And who before his monstrous Scholar *Cælestius*, ever denied that all mankind stood guilty of *Adams Apostacy* from God? When *Irenæus* Bishop of *Lyons* had excellently discoursed of Original sin, how that we were wounded *Antiquâ Serpentis Plaga*, with the old blow of the Devil, and how that *Adstrictum est Humanum genus Morti per Virginem*, viz. *Evam*. That all mankind was bound over to Death by the Transgression of Eve: And *Protoplasti peccato, vinculis alligati eramus*. "We are all bound in Chains of guilt by the sin of *Adam* the Protoplast. *St. Austin* made use of this Testimony, lib. 1. cap. 2. contra *Jul.* Videſne Antiquum Dei Hominem, quid de Antiqua Serpentis Plagâ sentiat? Quid de similitudine carnis peccati, per quam sanatur plaga Serpentis in carne peccati? Quid de Protoplasti peccato, per quod alligati eramus. "Do you not observe (says *Austin*) what that ancient Man of God thinks of that old blow given us by the Devil? What his Judgment is concerning the likeness of sinful flesh, (*Christ Incarnate*) by which the Wound of the Serpent in our sinful flesh is healed? And what his opinion is touching the sin of the Protoplast, by which we are all guilty? And *Origen* against *Celsus*, Lib. 4. agrees exactly with him, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἡ πάντων ὄσι, καὶ τὰ κατὰ τῆς γυναικὸς, ἐκ ὅσων καὶ ὅς ἐστι



λέγεται, *The Curse of Adam is common to all men, and there's no woman of whom it may not be said what was said of the first woman. So Nazianz. Orat. 3 de Pace, Εχρὴν γὰρ μὴ ὅλον σῶζεσθαι ὅλον πηλείσαντα, καὶ κατακρίθῃντα ἐκ τῆς πρωτοπλάστου παρακοῆς, καὶ κλοπῆς ἀντικειμένῃς, I have need to be wholly saved, who am wholly lapsed and condemned by the disobedience of Adam, and the subtilty of the Devil. And Austin quotes Chrysostom to prove both the influence of the first Adams disobedience upon our Condemnation; and that of Christs obedience upon our Acceptation with God. Ὅταν λέγῃ σοὶ Ἰουδαῖος, πῶς ἐ. ὁ. ἀποθῶσαντο τῷ Κριστῷ ἡ ὁκμή μὲν ἐσώθη, δυνήθη δὲ αὐτῷ λέγειν, πῶς ὁ ὁ. παρακῶσαντο, τῷ Ἀδάμ, ἡ ὁκμὴ μὲν κατὰ τὴν, When a cavilling Jew shall object, how can the World be saved by the Rectitude or Obedience of one Christ? Answer him again, by asking him; How came the World to be condemned by the disobedience of one Adam?*

I shall give the Reader no further trouble in this matter: The Greek and Latin Fathers were either of *Austins* or *Pelagius* his mind? if they were of *Pelagius* his opinion, then he has at once Canoniz'd them for *Orthodox Pelagians*; but if they were not of *Pelagius* his mind (for I know no *Medium*) they were of *Austins*, and by consequence of the same Judgment with the Synod of *Dort*.

St. *Hierom* indeed says expressly, *That before that Southern Devil* (he means *Arius*) *appeared in the World, the Ancients spake many things in the simplicity of their hearts, and not so advisedly, which might give some advantage to the Heretick; and Austin will confess, That Ante Mota Certamina Pelagiana, the Fathers seemed to speak favourably of free-will: but afterwards multò diligentiores, vigilantioresque facti sunt, they began to bestir themselves, and watch over their words a little better.* Now as it would be a severe charge upon all the *Primo-primitive* Fathers, that they were *Arians*, because a suspicious word at sometimes drop'd from their Mouths, or Pens; so would it be a rash and ignorant censure of them, that they were all *Pelagians*, because some odd expressions fell from them, which may seem to favour *Pelagianism*: And therefore I am in hope, since *Pelagius* is risen from the dead, this sleepy Age will awake, and give him no ground by unwary Expressions; at least we expect thus much, that *Non-conformists* may not be ruined, because they are no wiser than *Austin*.

Sett. 2. A second Branch of the charge is, That St. *Austin* agrees not with himself. A pitiful sorry self-inconsistent Scribler he was it seems, that could not make his matters hang together: One that caper'd

caper'd backwards and forwards ; that it was the easiest thing in the world to trip up his heels ; such a Novice was this *Austin* : all which I could easily believe, when it shall be proved, that he wrote *the first and second part of the serious Enquiry*. Really, that Man must have amassed a vast stock of confidence, that shall hope with one puff of contemptuous breath to blow away that fair heap of Repute, that that Fathers Name has gathered in so many Centuries : and he must have an over-weening conceit of his own Rhetorick, that can presume to perswade this Learned Age, that he was so insignificant a Ceremony, so great a Trifler. The Papists with incredible zeal have struggled for him ; the Protestants have tooth and nail wrestled to draw him into their Tents ; all parties have ambitiously courted his suffrage ; at last comes one *Hugh Groot*, and our Enquirer, and they cashier him as an inconsiderable fellow, not worth the whistling.

But *Luther* had this great stone thrown at his head by *Bellarmino* : And the Learned Dr. *Field* thus puts by the blow. On the Church. Book 3. Chap. 42. “ *Luther* (says he) was as worthy a Divine as the World had any in those times, or in many Ages before ; and that for clearing sundry Points of greatest moment in our Christian profession, much obscured and entangled before with the intricate disputes of the Schoolmen : all succeeding Ages shall be bound to honour his happy Memory : That herein he proceeded by degrees, and in his latter Writings disliked that which in his former he did approve, is not so strange a thing. Did not *Austin*, the greatest of all the Fathers, and the worthiest Divine the Church of God ever had since the Apostles time, write a whole Book of Retractions ? Did we not carefully observe what things he wrote whilest a Presbyter, and what when made a Bishop ? What before he enter'd into the Conflict with *Pelagius*, and what afterwards ? Did he not formerly attribute the Election of those that were chosen to Eternal Life, to the foresight of Faith, which afterwards he disclaimed as a meer *Pelagian* conceit ? And would it not vex a man of our Enquirers humour, that *Austin* the Presbyter should be more Orthodox than *Austin* the Bishop.

The truth is, St. *Austin* disagrees no more with himself, than it became a wise man, who by long studying the Scriptures, and the Primitive Fathers, had gained a more concocted and well-digested knowledge of Religion ; his Retractions were never laid in his dish, but interwoven amongst those Excellencies which Crowned his Learned

ed Head, before now. A peice of such self-denial it was, that a proud heart could not bear, unless more politick Considerations turned the scale; this last Age has few instances of such an ingenuity as will confess it self *Truths Prisoner*, though it abounds with too many that *surrender themselves Captives* to base lusts, and worldly interest: Their own *Grotius* professes he was *progressive* and very prone to dislike what a little before he was well pleased with, and the Reasons of his Change were evident to all the World.

*Self. 3.* A third Branch of this charge is, *That St. Austin disagrees with the Church of England.* There are indeed a knot of Gentlemen, that in sight of *Right and Truth*, are resolved to be the Church of *England*, and with these *St. Austin*, and the Ancient Fathers have no very good correspondence, nor are they ambitious of it: But that the Ancient Church of *England* had very high thoughts of *Austins* Judgment, is from hence evident, that she quotes his opinion for one: at least of the Articles of her Faith, and justifies her Authority from his Doctrine, *Art. 29* But yet if the Church should be a weary of him, (as I am confident she never will) and has no further service to command him, 'tis but transmitting him with Letters of safe Conduct into *Holland*, where the Divines of the Synod of *Dort's* perswasion will give him better Quarter, and a most Cordial welcome; and there's no harm done.

*Self. 4.* Another Branch of this tedious charge is, *That he was a Devout good Man, but whose Piety was far more commendable than his Reason.* Fuit utilis ad monita danda piæ vitæ, ad Scripturas interpretandas satis infœlix; That is, *The Man was a well-meaning Zealot!* One that according to his dim-light meant honestly, but he never had wit enough to write *Obscure Annotations upon the Canticles*; he, poor Man, was little versed in *Anacreons Ribaldry*, nor had much studied *Ovid de Arte Amandi*; he was a meer stranger to *Catullus* and *Martial*: and therefore must needs be *Satis*, nay *Nimis ad interpretandas Scripturas infœlix*. The most wretched unhappy creature that ever bungled at a Text of Scripture. It was never my unhappiness but once to hear the learned *A. B. Usher* reproach'd, and it was by a Grave Divine of the same temper, and upon the same account; That the *Primate* was indeed an honest Man, but one of no depth of Judgment.

We need not search far for a Reason, why these men cry down *Austins Reason*: In short, 'tis but to be reveng'd on him for crying down theirs; for there's a certain Malepert sawcy thing, as blind

as a Beetle, and as giddy as a Goose, which they have Nick-named Reason, and this *Austin* decries with some severity. Thus the Learned *Jewell* against *Harding*, Art. 4. Divis. 17. observes, That *Austin* speaking of the Scripture, judging Mysteries by Reason, saith thus, "*Hæc consuetudo periculosa est. per Scripturas Divinas enim multo tutius Ambulatur: And again, Si Ratio contra Divinarum Scripturarum auctoritatem redditur, quamvis accuta sit, fallit verisimilitudine, vera enim esse non potest. If Reason be brought against the Authority of the Scriptures, though it may seem accute, and witty, yet 'tis but fallacious under the shadow of Truth, for 'tis impossible it should be True.* And for this he quotes, *Ad Marcellinum* Ep. 7. And let the Reader have a special care of the Quotation, for the Ecclesiastical Politicians sake.

But that our *Austin* was no such shallow-brain'd fellow, no such half-witted piece as those Divines judg it their interest to represent him. I shall call in the Testimony of *Jerome*, one whose Learning and Judgment may at least counterballance those of the Enquirer, I have always (says he to *Austin*) revered thy holiness, increase in Vertue: Thou art famous through the world: Catholics reverence thee as the Rebuilder of the Ancient Faith. And I promise you he must be no Block-head that shall be able to Redintegrate the ruinous Doctrine of the Christian Church: But I shall knock all dead with an infallible, therefore irrefragable Testimony; 'tis no less, I assure you, than that of *Cælestinus* Bishop of Rome: "We have always accounted *Austin* a man of holy memory for his Life, and merits, of our Communion, whom we have long since remembred to have been of so great knowledge, that he was amongst the best Masters. It would be impertinent to tell you, how *Paulinus* Bishop of Nola, calls him the great Light set upon the Candlestick of the Church; or how *Prosper* gives him the Character of a very sharp Wit, clear in his Disputations, Catholic in his Expositions of the Faith: But to what purpose should we controul him with inferior Evidences after that of a Pope? or to what end Subpœna our little Witnesses after these Grandees? For surely he that will break *Austins* Pate, will not fear to dash out *Prosper's* Brains.

Self. 5. Another Branch of this endless Indictment is, That being hard put to it by the Manichees on the one hand, and the Pelagians on the other, he was not able to extricate himself. See in *illius* Ambages induxit, ut non invenerit quâ se extricaret. You see, I hope, that if ever we should want an able Head to translate *Grotius* into English, our

*Enquirer* is the man : Never was poor man so bewildred, so sadly intangled in the Briers, as this *Austin*, between the *Manickæan fatal Necessity*, and the *Pelagian Contingency* : one while he's just a splitting upon the *Scylla of Free-will* ; and whilst he goes a Point or two too near the wind, he's ready to be swallowed up of the desperate Gulf of *stoical Necessity*. I shall say no more ; let the Reader seriously peruse *St. Austins Works*, and when he has done, study *this Enquirers Volumes*, and by that time he may be satisfied, whether all his Rhetorick and Confidence will make him a competent judg of *St. Austins Learning*.

*Sect. 6.* His conclusion of his Charge is, *That he was rather forced into his Opinions, than made choice of them.* He whose Tongue is his own, may employ it how he pleases, but this slander carries its confutation, as well as its confidence in its Forehead. 'Tis as if we should conclude, That men become *enemies*, because they have shed one anothers blood ; whereas most think they wound and shed one anothers blood, because they were *first enemies*. It was the zeal of this Learned and Holy person for the Cause of God, that put him upon Study, that drew him out in the open Field, against the open Enemies of the Grace of God, who might otherwise have slept secure in a whole skin : Dispute cleared up Truths to him, but he was not forced from any, or into any. I shall conclude this Head, with that of *Bradwardine*, another famous Champion in the same Cause with *Austin*, *Ecce enim quod non nisi tactus dolore Cordis refero, sicut olim contra unum Dei Prophetam, octingenti, & quinquaginta Prophetæ Baal, & similes reperti sunt, quibus & innumerabilis populus adhaerebat ; Ita & hodie in hac causâ, Quot O Domine, hodie cum Pelagio, pro libero Arbitrio contra gratiam tuam pugnant, & contra Paulum Pargilem gratiæ specialem ? Exurge ergo, Domine, sustine, protege robora, consolve ; scis enim quod nusquam viriute mei, sed tuâ confisus, tantillum aggredior tantam causam.* "Behold ! (which I cannot mention without grief of heart) as of old against one Prophet of God, Eight hundred and fifty of the Prophets of *Baal*, and such like, were found, to whom a great multitude of people did adhere ; so in this Cause, How many, O Lord, at this day contend for *Free-will* with *Pelagius* against thy free Grace, and against *St. Paul* that famous Champion of Grace ? Arise therefore, O Lord, uphold, defend, strengthen, comfort me ; for thou knowest that not trusting to my own strength but thine, so weak a Combatant has engaged in so great a Cause.

¶ 2. His second assault is against the *Synod of Dort*: A task as needless as the *Answer* it self, and such as will not quit for cost; for having already routed *Austin*, this poor *Synod* must fall in course with him, and be buried under his Ruines.

That it was a *Dutch Synod* I cannot deny: *Dort* is, and always was in the Province of *Holland*; and therefore to pare off as much needless Controversie as may be, let him triumph in our Concession, and make his best on't: *The Synod of Dort was a Dutch Synod.*

That *England was not within the jurisdiction of Dort*, I shall easily admit: Nay, I can be contented that it be exempted from the *Popes Western Patriarchate*, if *Grotius*, *B. Bramhal*, and some others would agree to it. The Question then is, *How far the Church of England was, or is concerned in, at Agreement with, or obliged by the Decrees thereof?*

That King *James* sent thither several of his most Learned and Eminent Divines, premunited with an Instrument, and thereby impowred to sit, hear, debate, conclude upon those Arduous Points that should be brought before them, I think is not denied, but by those who deny there ever was any such *Synod*. That they did according to their Instructions, go thither, sit there, debate upon, and at last subscribe to the determinations of that Convention, is also out of dispute: If their subscription did not formally oblige the Nation, yet it evidently proves what was the judgment of the Nation: Nor do I think it had been for the Honour of this Church to have been of that Religion, because those delegates had subscribed; but they therefore subscribed, because they were in their own judgments conformable to that of the Church, of the Religion and Judgment of the Council.

There had been formerly one *Baro* in the University of *Cambridge*, who delivered himself somewhat broadly in favour of the *Arminian* Novelties: Hereupon the Heads of that University, sent up *Dr. Whitaker*, and *Dr. Tyndall*, to *A. B. Whitgift*, that by the interposition of his Authority those errors might be crush'd in the Egg, which were but *New Laid* as yet, and not hatch'd in the bosom of this Church. The zealous Prelate presently convenes some of the most Judicious Divines of his Province; and *Novemb. 10. 1595.* by their advice, draws up the *Lambeth Articles*, coming up to, if not going beyond the *Dordrechtan Creed*: Forthwith he transmits these Articles to his Brother of the other Province, the *A. B. of York*, who receives and approves them: So that now we have the *Primate of England*,

and the *Primate of All England* owning more than virtually the Decrees of that Synod ; and surely two such persons, *so learned*, as having been both of them Professors of Divinity in the University, and of *so great Power* in the Church, must be presumed, if any, to understand the true meaning of the 39 Articles in the *Five Controverted Points*. After all this, King *James* allows the inserting them into the Articles of the Church of *Ireland* ; and it were somewhat difficult to believe, that a Prince so wise and learned would allow that Doctrine for *Orthodox* in one of his Kingdoms, which was reputed *Heretical* in the other : unless we will say, they were erroneous at home, but purged themselves like *French-Wines* at Sea, by crossing *St. Georges Channel* ; or that the malignity, or latent poison of them, was suck'd out by the sanative Complexion of the *Irish Air* and Soyl : If then the substance of the Articles was owned, it's no matter whether the Jurisdiction of the Synod was owned : for I rather think, that the Synod of *Dort* owned the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, than that the Church of *England* owned that Synods Jurisdiction.

I must here remember him of his own discourse in the Introduction, and desire to know whether he abide by that Doctrine he once Preached to us : *That the Presence of the British Bishops in the Council of Arles*, was good proof of *the Nations piety*. Let him show how that Proof proceeds, and it's very probable we shall be in a fair way to show him how the presence of the English Delegates at the Synod of *Dort*, might imply, that the Church of *England* did compromise with it in the Points now in question.

I confess I do not well understand the Mystery of one company of mens making a Faith for another ; but yet I may plead from an equality of Reason, that if the Non-conformists are bound up by the Decrees of a Convocation at *London*, where they have no representatives, the Church of *England* may be as well bound up by the Decrees of *Dort*, where she had her Representatives. If it be said that this Church had no equal Number at *Dort* to make a full representation of her Body ; it may be answer'd, that in the Convocation 1571, there was no such equal representation of the Clergy, nor any at all of the people, who have Souls to save, and Consciences to account for, and ought not to be concluded in matters of Faith, by what a couple of Clerks shall agree to, who are only chosen by the Parochial Ministers : I never saw a good Argument to this day, to prove, that the people ought to believe all that their Ministers believe, or that the Ministers are bound to hold all that their Representatives shall



shall subscribe, seeing it cannot be supposed that they give them so large a Commission: and if they should, it were actually void, because they give away their Consciences, which are none of their own.

How things are now, I know not well; but in former times a Convocation has been judged no equal representation, either of the inferior Clergy, or the Body of the People. In the lower house of Convocation, there have been in some Diocesses, one Dean, one Clerk for the Cathedral, three or four Archdeacons; and for the inferior Clergy of the whole Diocess, only Two Clerks to Counterballance all the rest; So that all things must of necessity be concluded according to the temper and interest of the Cathedrals, and that I think was no equal Representation; but these things are inconsiderable. He comes now to draw up a Charge against, not the Jurisdiction, but the Doctrines of that Synod,

1. They were *such as knew not how God could be just, unless he was cruel; nor great, unless he decreed to damn the far greater part of Mankind.* A company of silly Souls I perceive they were, and their Heads just of the same size with *St. Austins*: But in my poor judgment they took the wrong end of the Staff; for it had been much the harder task to make him *Just*, if he were first supposed *Cruel*: but this is one of those Chymical Consequences, which the persons of this distemper and prejudice use when their blood is up, to fasten upon the Principles of the Calvinists. It was an ingenious Observation of the Author of *Orig. Sacr.* p. 10, where he assigns this as one cause of error. "To question the soundness of Foundations, for the Apparent Rottenness of the Superstructures: For (*says he*), There is nothing more usual, than for men who exceedingly detest some absurd Consequence they see may be drawn from a Principle supposed, to reject the Principle it self for the sake of that Consequence, which it may be doth not necessarily flow from it, but from the shortness of their own Reason doth only appear so to do. And if it were possible to perswade these Censurers to so much humility, as to suspect they may possibly not be infallible, in drawing Conclusions from other mens Principles, all this heat might be over: What the Synod of *Dort* asserts in this matter is thus much. *Art. 15. Deus Homines quosdam ex liberrimo, justissimo, & immutabili bene placito decrevit in Communi Miseriâ, in quam se suâ Culpâ præcipitarunt, relinquere, nec salvificâ fide, & conversione donare, sed in viis suis, & sub justo judicio relictos, tandem, non tantum propter infidelitatem, sed etiam*

*Cetera peccata omnia, ad declarationem Justitiæ damnare, & æternum punire*; In which, as there is nothing but what is *Just*, so there's nothing at all that is *Cruel*. 1. That Act of God which *our Enquirer*, for the greater Grace, will call a *Decree to damn the far greatest part of mankind*, the Synods calls a *Rejection of some men*, or a *Decree to pass by some men*. *Quosdam Homines decrevit Relinquere*. 2. They say not that God Decrees to damn Men *absolutely*; but, *Propter infidelitatem*. & *cetera omnia peccata damnare, to damn men for their Infidelity, and all their other sins*; which is neither injustice, nor cruelty. 3. They say indeed that God Decrees to leave some men in the common *Misery*; but withall, 'tis such as *whereinto they have thrown themselves through their own fault*. *In communi miseriâ, in quam se suâ Culpâ precipitarunt*. 4. They say, this is an *Act of Justice in God* to leave them to lye in that common misery, into which they had plunged themselves; it is *Justissimo Beneficito*. So that all the difficulty will be to resolve, 1. Whether it be an *Act of Cruelty* in God to leave man as he found him in *Missâ corruptâ*; & *damnabili*? And 2. Whether it be an *Act of Injustice* in God to damn men for their *unbelief, and other sins*. If neither of these, it will be no difficult province to make it out, How God may be *just in damning men for their sin*, and yet not *cruel in leaving them in their sin*.

I am aware that this whole Controversie at last must empty it self into that of *Original sin*. And a difficulty it is that may require *strong Heads* to prove, that will not bring *humble Faith* to believe, how men have plunged themselves into the common *Misery*, wherein God leaves *those some*, by their own default. *Culpâ suâ*: But the Church of *England* will be responsible for this difficulty, who determines in her Ninth Article, That *in every Person born into the World it deserves Gods wrath and damnation*.

The pretence for this odious Imputation, is nothing but a *Fancy*, which forsooth these great Masters of Wit have agreed to call *Reason*, That that which would be *cruelty and injustice in Man*, must presently be so in *God*: As thus. Because it would be *cruelty and inhumanity in me* to see my *Enemy* (or if it were but *his Oxe or his Ass*) lye in a *Ditch* ready to perish, and not to put forth a helping hand to pluck him out, that therefore it must be *cruelty in God* to see a sinner lye under sin and its present Consequents, and not to deliver him from that state: Whereas we might consider that God has tyed us by the *Laws of Charity and Interest* to such Assistance, because we may possibly call for the same Assistance from others

others in our Miseries; but God is not so bound up, having once set his Creature on his legs, to raise him up as oft as he shall please to fall.

The vanity of this Reasoning will more easily appear, if we take the pains ( a little pains will do it ) to put, and consider this Case. *Scelus qui non prohibet cum potest jubet*; 'tis *Seneca's* Maxime, and owned by all, That every man is bound to prevent and hinder all the wickedness he possibly and lawfully can: now, if we will *measure God by this Rule*, we must conclude, that God is *unjust and cruel*. if he hinders not all the evil in the World, which he can possibly and lawfully prevent; Nay, put the case as favourably as you can. That God is bound to prevent all the wickedness of mankind, as far as he can by *moral means*, not exerting any Physical Influence upon his Creature, to impede its vicious propensities; yet this will not excuse him from *apparent injustice and cruelty*, if our *Obligations* must be made the *Rule and Measure* of his: For he has not in many places of the World sent them so much as *the Preaching of the Gospel*, nor help'd them to *the best Arguments* against disobedience, nor propounded to them the *strongest Motives* to obedience.

The *Remonstrants* I perceive would gladly fasten this upon the *Contra Remonstrants*, that there is the same Reason and Proportion between *foreseen Faith and Election*, and *foreseen infidelity and disobedience*, and *Reprobation*. So *Ame's* *Corou* p. 27. "Paril tatem quam inferre conantur inter electionem, & reprobationem To which he thus returns, "Sed sine Ratione, privilegium enim exemptionis, & liberationis à pœnâ meritâ, benè potest aliquibus concedi, sine ullâ ratione Conditionis antecedentis, & impellentis; & "pœna tamen cæteris infligi ratione sui meriti, i. e. The privileged of Exemption and Deliverance from deserved punishment; may safely be granted to some without any respect had to an Antecedent and moving condition, and yet the punishment be inflicted upon the rest, on the account of their own demerits: So that he seems to have cleared what he said, p. 14. *Interim advenire debent aliam esse Rationem infidelitatis ad Rejectionem: aliam vero fidei ad Electionem*: To shut up this discourse: If by reprobation this *Enquirer* will needs understand a *peremptory Decree of God to damn any Man*, without respect had to the violation of his Law, the Synod is a perfect stranger to it: But if by Reprobation, they may have liberty to understand no more than they have a mind to. viz. *Gods purpose not to give Grace to some to whom he owes it not*: As it speaks no *injustice*

justice in him, because he was *not* their Debtor ; so neither does it imply any cruelty, if as a Righteous, and just Judge, he punish them for those sins which they commit for want of such special and undeserved Grace.

2. A second Charge against the Doctrine of that Synod is ; That they could not tell how man should be kept humble, unless they made him not a man, but a stock, or a stone. And yet the harder task had been to make him Humble, if they had made him either a stock or a stone, for it would have puzzled them to Preach a Sermon of Humility with any considerable success to such an Auditory: though the Legend would persuade us, that Venerable Bede had once, and but once, that Happiness.

But let the Reader hear what they say for themselves, *Art. 3. 4. Sess 13. 16.* " *Sicuti post lapsum, Homo non desinit esse Homo, in intellectu, & voluntate præditus, nec peccatum quod universum genus humanum pervasit, naturam generis humani sustulit, sed spiritus aliter occidit; Ita etiam hæc Divina Regenerationis gratia, non agit in hominibus, tanquam truncis, & stipitibus, nec voluntatem, ejusque proprietates tollit, aut in vitam violenter cogit. sed spiritualiter vivificat, sanat, corrigit, suaviter simulac potenter flectit.* After the Fall, man ceased not to be a man, endowed with an understanding, and will ; nor bath sin, which overspread all mankind, taken away the nature of mankind, but only spiritually stain it : So also that Divine Regenerating Grace, works not in men, as if they were stocks, or blocks, nor takes away the will, and its Essential Properties ; or compels it by force against its will, but spiritually quickens it, heals it, corrects it, and gently, but yet powerfully inclines it. Hence it is clear, that this Synod were satisfied that God in the work of Conversion deals not with Men as if they were Stocks, (and the same you may imagine of Stones) but the Question then will be, whether upon this Hypothesis, they knew how to keep Man humble : Man indeed is a very proud Creature, and it may exercise the skill of the wisest how to keep him humble upon the best Principles ; but of all that have undertaken this hard task, I most admire at their want of skill, that know not how to keep Man humble unless they knock him on the Head. The knot of the Controversie among the contending-parties lies here.

The *Contra Remonstrants* assert : *Post Dei operationem, non manus in Hominis potestate Regenerari, vel non Regenerari : So Ames, Coron.*

p. 227. *After the Work of God (i. e. his utmost Work that he designs in Conversion) it remains not in mans power to be Regenerated. or not Regenerated; for they suppose that God does not leave his Work in the halves, but that before that effectual grace which proceeds from his purpose of Regenerating, does cease to operate, the person is actually Regenerated; yet still that in all the process of this glorious Work, he offers no violence to, commits no Rape upon the Natural Faculties of the Soul: The Remonstrants on the other hand assert, That "Positis omnibus operationibus, quibus ad Conversionem, in "nobis efficiendam, Deus utitur, manet tamen ipsa Conversio, ita "in nostrâ potestate, ut possimus non Converti. Supposing the whole Work of God, which he uses to work Conversion in us, to be finished; yet still Conversion it self remains so far in our power, that we may not be converted. Which Principle seems clearly to ascribe Conversion not to Gods grace, but to Mans will and strength; it's the Man that makes himself differ from another: It's Man that Regenerates himself, when all is done that God does; and perhaps our Enquirer may have something to do to keep Man humble upon this Hypothesis. But whether of these two Principles makes the nearer approach to the Church of England, I mean that Doctrine which is express'd in the thirty nine Articles, let the 10 Art. judge. The condition of Man is such after the Fall, that he cannot turn nor prepare himself by his own Natural strength to Faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good Works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have this good will. Our Enquirer will tell us by and by, p. 9. That there has been little or no alteration made in the Doctrine of this Church, since the beginning of the Reformation. And therefore I conclude, that there has been no alteration made from an Anti-Arminian to an Arminian sense: for, that cannot be called little or no alteration. Now that this 10. Art. in the beginning of the Reformation, in Edward VI. Reign, had an Anti-Arminian sense, will be out of Question to him that remembers what Addition there was then made to it. The grace of Christ, or the H. Ghost by him given, doth take away the stony Heart, and giveth an Heart of Flesh: and although those that have no will to good things, he maketh them to will, and those that would evil things, he maketh them not to will, yet nevertheless he forceth not the will. Articles Printed by F. Day. Anno 1553. Cum Privilegio: If this then be the sense of the Article, let him go practise at home, and turn his Brains, how to keep Man humble, and*

and yet neither make him *stock nor stone*: and when he has found out the Mystery, send word to the Synod, who I am assured never asserted higher than this amounts to; But if this be not the sense of the Article at present, though it was once so, then it must follow that the Church has more than a little alter'd her Doctrine since the Reformation: And then a worse thing than all this will follow: for p. 8. He allows, *That if this Church did approach too near Popery, it would serve to justify a Secession from it.* But says another, if it approaches too near *Arminianism*, it approaches too near *Popery*: and therefore our Enquirer will warrant any Mans Secession from the Church, without the least imputation of Schism: What a close connection there is between those two errors we shall hear e're long, and thither we refer the Reader, when we have told him, that the Church of England is certainly free from any Tincture of Arminianism, and so far free from any spot of Popery: only it concern'd the Enquirer to understand the consequences of his own scandalous Reflections. I have done with his first Answer.

2. I come now to his second: *The Articles of the Doctrine of this Church do with such admirable prudence and wariness handle these Points, as if particular respect was had to these Men. and care taken that they might Abundare sensu suo.*

I cannot imagine what greater Reproach he could throw upon these famous Articles, and their worthy Compilers, than to suggest that they were calculated for all *Meridians and Latitudes*: As if the Church did imitate *Λοξίας*, the *Delphian Apollo*, whose Oracles wore two faces under one Hood, and were penn'd like those *Amphilogies* that cheated *Crasus* and *Pyrrhus* into their destruction: Or as if like *Janus*, they looked *πρόω & ὀπίσσω*, backwards and forwards; and like the untouch'd Needle, stood indifferently to be interpreted through the two and thirty Points of the Compass. The Papists do never more maliciously reproach the Scriptures, than when they call it a *Lesbian Rule*, a *Nose of Wax*, a *Leaden Dagger*, a pair of *Seamans Trowles*; a *movable Dial*, you may make it what a Clock you please: And yet they never arriv'd at that height of Blasphemy, as to say it was industriously so penn'd by the *Amanuenses of the Holy Ghost*.

I dare not entertain so little Charity for an Assembly of Holy and Learned men convened upon so solemn an occasion, that they would play *Legerde-main*, and contrive us a Scheme of Divinity, which should be *Instrumentum pacis non veritatis*: The Conventicle of *Trent* indeed

indeed acted like themselves, (that is, a pack of Juglers) who when they were gravelled and knew not how to hush the noise and importunate Clamour of the bickering Factions, the craftier leading Men found out a *Temper* (as they call'd it) to *skin over* that Wound which they could not heal, and durst not search; And what was the success of these Carnal Policies? Only this! Both parties retained their differing opinions, believed just as they did before; and when they found how they had been cajouled, the Controversies which for a while had been smothered under the Ashes of a *blind Subscription*, broke out into a more violent flame.

The craft of this Politick Juncto, that impartial Historian *Pietro Polano* has opened to the World: *Hist. Council of Trent. p. 216. In the Year 1546.* (says he) *In the end of the Session* *Dominicus a Soto*, principal of the Dominicans, wrote three Books of *Nature and Grace*, wherein all his old Opinions were found; Then comes *Andreas Vega*, a great Man amongst the Franciscans, and he wrote no less than fifteen Books upon the 16 Points of the Decree that passed that Session, and expounded all according to his own Opinions: And yet their opinions were directly contrary to one another, though both supposed to agree with the Decree of the Council. So righteous it is with God, that they who design not their Confessions for an *Instrument of Truth*, which is *Gods End*, should not find them an *Instrument of Peace*, which is all their End: They that will separate *Truth from Peace*, shall certainly miss both of *Peace and Truth*.

The Title prefix'd to the Book of Articles does abundantly secure us of their Honesty, *The Catholick Doctrine believed and professed in the Church of England*. Now how shall we at all believe, if we know not what to believe? And if the Trumpet gives an uncertain Sound, 'tis all one as if it were not sounded: That which is every thing, and every where, is nothing, and no where. That which has no determinate Sense, has no Sense, and that's very near akin to *Non-sense*: The Jews indeed have a Tradition, that the *Manna* was what every Mans appetite could relish; and such a Religion would these Men invent as should be most flexible, where it ought not to bend; and where it should yield, there to be inflexible. Strange it is, that Religion of all things in the World should be unfix'd, and like *Delos*, or *O-Brazile*, float up and down in various and uncertain Conjectures: What *Arist.* us'd to say of one of his Books, that it was *Editus*, & non *Editus*; and what was the just reproach of the *Rhemists Testament*, that it came forth (as some report of a great Princes Sword) with



with a *Padlock* upon't, so stuffed with Pen and Ink-horn Terms, that it was almost as unintelligible as *Latin*; the same contumely does our *Enquirer* pour out upon the Articles of the Church. which were the most famous Testimony that then for many Years, nay Ages, had been given to the Truth of the Gospel. I conclude then, that he must be very immodest, that can entertain a thought so unworthy the Learning, Religion, and sincerity of our first Reformers, which were their greatest Ornaments, as they were of their Times, and the Articles the greatest glory of them both.

I know it's an easie matter to draw up a Proposition so dubiously, that the greatest Dissenters may subscribe it; but what is the advantage of such dawbing Policy? Peace or Unity of Judgment? Some Men indeed have got a Worm in their Pates, and they fancy this an expedient for these ends, but there's no such matter; for the Subscribers in this Case do not bow their judgments to the Articles, but gently bend the Articles to their judgment. It's not the Bank that moves to the Boat, but the Boat that moves to the Bank, and each Party thinks it self the stronger, because it can draw in the obsequious Articles to abet their opinions.

When therefore he insinuates, that they of the Calvinistical perswasion, in subscribing the Articles, are forced to use *Scholastick Subtleties* to reconcile their opinions to them; we entreat them to use *Scholastick Subtleties*, who are of the other judgment, to reconcile the Articles to their opinions, and they will find all too little, unless they borrow a Point or two of Conscience, first to resolve to subscribe, and then defend it afterwards as well as they can.

And when he intimates that they were only *some few Divines* of this Church that used this expedient; we know well, that till the appearance of the late Archbishop *Laud*, the generality of this Church were of the *Dort* perswasion: Arminianism has been openly declared *Schism*; *Arminius* himself an *Enemy to the grace of God*, by our greatest and most Learned Princes; and the greatest of our Church-Men have declared against it, as a stranger and enemy to our Church. But all this, as I observ'd, was brought in to vilifie the *Synod of Dort*, and that eminently Learned and Holy Person *St. Austin*, whose Credit whilst the *Enquirer* would wound, he shall but like the *Viper in the Fable*, break his own Teeth, and never hurt the impregnable *Steele*.

2. A second pretended Objection against the Church is, *That it is not sufficiently purged from the dross of Romish Superstitions.*

It's a marvelous advantage to him that challenges another to fight if he may prescribe and impose the Weapon; this Authority has our Enquirer and some of his Camerades arrogated as peculiar to themselves, that they may put what objections they please into the mouths of Dissenters.

For though they cannot in the largest Charity acquit a Party, (neither considerable for Number or solid Learning) which yet by noise and Pragmaticalness, and some other Artifices, have vested themselves with the Name of the Church; yet they are ready to clear the Articles of the Church from Popery and Arminianism.

I intend those alone, who would obtrude a meaning upon the Doctrine, as if it impugned particular Election, Original Sin, and asserted Free will, Justification by our own Works, and the rest of those Points whereof some mention has been made.

In the first of Car. I. The House of Commons exhibited Articles against one Mr. Richard Mountague: the fifth of which was thus: *And whereas in the 17th. of the said Articles, it is Resolved. [That God hath certainly decreed by his Counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen out of Mankind in Christ, and to bring them by Christ to Everlasting Salvation; wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a Benefit, be called according to Gods purpose working in due time, they through grace obey that calling, they be justified freely, walk Religiously in good works, and at last by Gods mercy attain to everlasting Felicity]; He, the said Richard Mountague, in the said Book called The Appeal, doth affirm and maintain, That men justified may fall away from that state which once they had. Thereby laying a most malicious scandal upon the Church of England, as if she did differ herein from the Reformed Churches in England, and the Reformed churches beyond the Seas, and did consent unto those pernicious Errours commonly called Arminianism, which the late famous Q. Eliz. and K. James of happy memory did so piously and Religiously labour to suppress. And farther they charge him, That the scope and end of his Book, was to give encouragement to Popery, and to withdraw his Majesties Subjects from the True Religion established; From whence we have gained this Point, that that Doctrine which denies Perseverance in them that were once Justified, doth abet Arminianism, and therein draw near Popery: But if these men might expound the Articles, they would deny the one, and abet the*

*the other ; and therefore do draw too near Popery : Hereupon Dissenters have a warrant under his own hand to withdraw from the Church, for (says he) p. 8. If the charge (of drawing too near the Church of Rome) were true, or if it were probable, it would justify their separation from it.*

In 5. *Caroli I.* The House of Commons made this protestation, *Whosoever shall bring in Innovation of Religion, or by Favour or Countenance seek to extend Popery or Arminianism, or other Opinion disagreeing from the truth, or Orthodox Church, shall be Reputed a Capital Enemy to this Kingdom and Commonwealth.*

And so close has the connexion between Popery and Arminianism ever been adjudged, that the Jesuits, who thoroughly understand their Interest, and the most proper and suitable means to promote it, have pitcht upon *This* as the best expedient to introduce *That* ; for thus in that Triumphant Letter of theirs to their Rector at *Brussels*, they express themselves, *Now we have planted that Sovereign Drug of Arminianism, which will purge the Protestants of their Heresie, and it flourishes, and brings forth fruit in due season.* Whence we are taught both our Disease, and our Remedy : The disease under which poor *England* laboured was *Protestancy*, the Remedy was the *Jesuits powder*, or a round Dose of *Arminianism*, which is it seems a specifick purger of that Humor.

That the Divines of this Church did formerly maintain a just suspicion, that the Opinions of *Conditional Election*, and *falling away totally from grace*, were an In-let to *Popery*, we need no other evidence than that Letter written by the *University of Cambridge* to their Chancellor, upon the occasion of *Barrets* and *Baro's* preaching up such like novelties : It was dated *March 8. 1595.* *If (say they) passage be admitted to these Errors, the whole Body of Popery will break in upon us by little and little, to the overthrow of all Religion.* And therefore they humbly beseech his Lordships good aid and assistance, for the suppressing those Errors in time ; and not only of those Errors. but of gross *Popery*, like by such means in time to creep in amongst them, as they found by late experience it dangerously begun.

I say, not that the Articles of the Church encline to *Popery*, nay they detest it ; but this I say, that if they did incline to *Arminianism*, they must to *Popery* ; If they do not, why are they with allowance so misconstrued ? If they do, then the secession of the Non-conformists is thereby justified.

Having

Having therefore made this Objection for the Dissenters, he will give them their Answer, and prove the unreasonableness of this suggestion, That the Church of *England* approaches too near the Superstitions of *Rome*.

1. *It's certain (says he) there hath been little or no Alteration made, either in the Doctrine, Discipline, or Liturgy, since the first Reformation.* Little or none? Does he mean for the better, or the worse? To say, there has little or none been made for the better, is a Commendation so cold, that silence had been more an Honour than such praise. The Reformation was begun as the times would bear; A fair Copy was set for posterity to imitate, never dreaming that their Rudiments should have been our utmost perfection, That their first step should have been our *Hercules Pillars*, and a *Ne plus ultra* to all future endeavours. To say, there has been little or no alteration made for the worse, is a more modest way of defamation; but Dissenters have many things to say to this.

*Self.* 1. That there have been considerable alterations made in the Articles themselves, if not as they remain in *Scriptis*, yet as they are publicly interpreted; for we subscribe not to a heap of *Letters and Syllables*, but to the sense and meaning of certain propositions, as they are owned by the Church. What the Church owns (say they) we can no otherwise understand, than by those writings which appear every day *Licensed* and approved by those of greatest Authority in the Church: Now if we may judge of the meaning of the Articles by those writings, They are as much Altered, as if *Negatives* had been changed into *Affirmatives*, or *Affirmatives* into *Negatives*. In former times they were generally subscribed, because the most scrupulous were generally informed by those of most eminent place in the Church, that the meaning was sound; but now (say they) we are informed otherwise, we see our mistake, the words have a different and contrary meaning; and therefore we must be excused in subscription. 2. They will say, That what the *Enquirer* calls little or nothing, is a very great something: for it concerns us not so much what is put into the *Liturgy* or *Rituals*, as what is made a *Condition of Communion* with the Church: Now in the beginning of the Reformation, though many things were in use, yet few imposed as the necessary Terms of enjoying a station in that Society; Things supposed indifferent were used as indifferent. In the 13th of *Q. Elizabeth*, subscription is only required to *Doctrinals*, and such Subscribers, though not ordained by Prelates, were admitted to officiate as Ministers of

the Church of *England*. But now subscription is peremptorily required to all and every thing contained in the Book of Common-prayer, The Book of ordering Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, wherein are considerable Doctrinal additions and alterations; such as the *different Orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, supposed to be distinct *jure Divino*: A Doctrine which Archbishop *Cranmer* understood not, as is evident from his *M. S.* exemplified in Dr. *Stil.* his *Irenicum*.

In the beginning of the Reformation, Ceremonies were retained to win upon the people who were then generally Papists, and doted upon old usages, and not as the necessary conditions of Communion; They were retained, not to shut out of doors the Protestants, which is their present use, but to invite in the Romanists, which was their Original end; but there's nothing more common, than for Institutions to degenerate, and be perverted from the first Reasons of their usage, and yet still to plead the *Credit of their Originals*: Thus *Indulgences*, and *Remission of sins*, were first granted to all that would engage in the *Holy War*, to recover the Sepulchre of Christ out of the hands of the *Saracens*, but in process of time they were dispensed to them who would massacre the *Waldenses*, and *Albigenses*, and such as could not obey the Tyranny of the *Romish* faction: Thus was the *Inquisition* first set up to discover the *Hypocritical Moors* in *Spain*; but the edge of it since turned against the Protestants And thus were the Ceremonies perverted, at first made a *Key to let in* the Papists, and now made a *Lock to shut out* Protestants. What a glorious work must it then be to abolish those Engines, that seeing they are become weak to do Good, they may be rendred as impotent to do mischief: Imitating herein the *Apostle*, who once circumcised *Timothy* to gain the weak *Jews*, yet stoutly refused to Circumcise *Titus*, lest he should stumble the weak *Gentiles*. 3. The Ceremonies it's true crept into the Church pretty early, yet they laid no weight, no stress upon them; It was decreed by the Council of *Sardica*, that none should be made a Bishop, but he that had passed the *Inferior Orders*, and continued in them for some time; and yet we see they insisted not upon such a Canon, when it might prejudice the Church, and exclude useful persons from the Ministry: and therefore *Nectarius* was chosen Patriarch of *Constantinople*, not only being a Layman, but unbaptized. As our Enquirer commends and admires the Churches wisdom in forming her Doctrinal Articles, that men of various persuasions might subscribe them; so her tenderness and wisdom had been

been no less admirable, had she recommended Ceremonies with such an Indifferency, that they who were passionately fond of them might be humoured, and they that protest they scruple them in Conscience towards God, might fairly let them alone: for it can be no dishonour to a Church to be as Lax in Ceremonies of humane constitution, as in Doctrines of Divine Revelation. 4. Dissenters say from good grounds, that that which makes all an insupportable burden, viz. That we must subscribe according to the clause of the 20th Article, that *the Church has power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, is added since the beginning of the Reformation.* And this they think heavier than all the Ceremonies put together; many could practice a thing, supposing it indifferent in it self, and having a real tendency to a greater good, who can by no means subscribe, that the Church has such a power to take away my liberty: I have taken notice, that in the Ancient Bibles of this Church, *the Contents of Psalm 149.* ran thus; *The Prophet exhorteth to praise God for his Love to his Church, and for his benefits.* But in the latter days we had got high ranting Language, *The Prophet exhorteth to praise God for his Love to his Church, and for that power that he hath given to his Church over the Consciences of Men:* This is no little Addition. 5. They will tell him, that the number of Nonconformists was considerable from the very Infancy of the Reformation, though it could not be expected that their names should be inserted in *the Church's Calender amongst the Confessors;* and that Nonconformity has run a line parallel with the National Reformation to this day.

But (says our Enquirer) *The main quarrel is, that we are not always Reforming.* No, that's not the main, nor any Quarrel that Dissenters have with them: Let but Reformation be made *in what is necessary, and as often as is necessary,* and I know none disposed to quarrel; it were better never to be sick, than to have a Remedy; yet upon supposition of a Disease, in my mind there's nothing like an *approved Medicine.* It's more desirable not to make Shipwreck, than to escape by a Plank; yet when a wrack is made, he deserves to sink that despises a subsidiary Plank: If it were possible for Churches not to contract corruption, I know no need, because no use of Reformation.

Some men hate Reformation, as the Bear hates the Stake. They pretend, that *the Reformation of the Church will discomfise the State:* But the best way to preserve the Iron, is to scower away the Rust: A dirty Face may be wash'd, and yet the skin never rub'd off; and the

House swept, and never thrown out of the windows: They plead again, That no Reformation can be made, but what will notably diminish the Revenues, Grandeur, and Credit of the Church. And this Objection has more real weight in it, than all the rest. This is the Capital grievance, *Ecce illæ Lachrimæ!* But does it not argue a Saleable and Mercenary Soul, that would Barter away Purity for Pluralities? The most severe Reformation would leave too much, if any thing, for such an Objector; whatever have been the specious Pretences, this has been the real obstruction of an effectual Reformation; Kings and Parliaments have always been inclinable towards a Redress of Exorbitances; but the covetousness and pride of Church-men have ever impeded their Pious endeavours. A Parliament in Queen Elizabeth's Reign, as we read in Dr. Fullers Ch. History, was bringing in a Bill against Pluralities, and Archbishop Whigfist sends a Letter to Her Majesty, signifying they were all undone Horse and Foot if it passed: Observe how he deplores the miserable state of the Church, *The woful and distressed estate whereinto we are like to fall, forceth us, with grief of heart, in most Humble manner to crave your Majesties most Sovereign Protection*—— Why, what is the matter? Were they making a Law against Preaching? No! or against Common-Prayer? By no means! what ailes then the distressed Man?—— why, *we therefore not as Directors, but as Humble Remembrancers, beseech your Highnesses favourable beholding of our present state, and what it will be in time, if the Bill against Pluralities should take place.* No question it must be utter extirpation of the Christian Religion. Thus in another Letter to the same Queen he complains with Lamentations that would soften a heart of Marble. That they have brought in a Bill giving liberty to marry at all times of the year, without restraint: well, but if men be obnoxious to the evil all times of the year, why should they not use the Remedy that God has appointed all times of the year? The Apostle who tells us, *It's better to marry than burn*, did not except any time of the year. But why may not a Parliament make a Law, as well as the Ecclesiastical Court give a License, that it shall be Lawful to marry at any time of the year? Ay but the Parliament will make the Law for nothing, whereas those other will have Money for their Licenses. But he proceeds,—— *It's Contrary to the old Canons, continually observed by us.* Why, but is it not contrary to the old Canons to take Money for a License? Yes! but—— *It tendeth to the slander of the Church, as having hitherto maintained an Error.* And now you have the bottom of the Bag: All Reformation must touch the



the Clergy either in their *Credits or Profits*; and 't were better never to put a hand to that work, than to touch either of those with a little finger.

2. His second Answer is, *All is not to be esteemed Popery that is held by the Church of Rome*; we are not to depart further from her, than she has departed from the Truth; and those things wherein they agree, are such (and no other) as were generally received by all Christian Churches, and by the Roman before it lay under any ill Character. Many things might be returned, but I shall say little; only 1. As all is not to be accounted Popery which is held by the Church of Rome; so neither is all to be accounted Schism which hot men in their passions and prejudices will call so. Let that be now accounted Popery, which in the beginning of the Reformation, by the most eminent Divines of this Nation, was so accounted, and he will hear no more I presume of that Argument. 2. I would be satisfied whether Rome departed from the Truth, simplicity, and complexion of the Evangelical worship, when she loaded the Church with such multitudes of unnecessary Ceremonies, and Superstitions; If not, why did the Church of England depart from her in Any? if so, why did she not depart in All? 3. Why should we be so tender of departing from an abominable Strumpet? Were it not more Christian to say, we will depart from the Reformed Churches abroad, no further than they have departed from the Truth, and then the Argument will be ingenuously strong, rather to part with Ceremonies that we may Syncretize with Protestants, than retain them; that we may hold fair Quarter with Papists. 4. It cannot be made appear, that those things wherein the Agreement yet abides, were generally received by all Christian Churches: Kneeling at the Sacrament was not received in the Church, till Rome came under an ill and most odious Character; many Centuries after the Apostles knew it not; and when it was first entertain'd, it was accommodated to the grand Idol of Transubstantiation.

But our Enquirer has a mind to be Resolved in a few Questions for his own private satisfaction.

1. Qu. *If there be such a dangerous affinity between the Church of England, and the Romish, how came it to pass that the blessed Instruments of our Reformation, Archbishop Crammer, and others, laid down their lives in Testimony to this against that? I meddle not with his dangerous Affinities, nor Consanguinities, nor whether they come within the Prohibited Degrees or no; what I am concern'd in, is his Argument.*

which may receive this short Answer. They laid down their lives in testimony against those Errors wherein they *differ'd.* and not against those wherein they might be *agreed*: They might possibly agree in *many*, and yet differ in so many as might cost them their Lives: There was *difference* enough to justify their *opposition*; and yet there might be *agreement* enough to justify a modest complaint.

I once heard a person upon his Arraignment for Burglary plead strongly, That he had served his Majesty faithfully in his Wars; the Judge I remember took him up somewhat too short: Friend! you are not indicted for your *Loyalty*, but for *breaking a House*: The Nonconformists agree with the Church of *England* in more, and more material points, than *England* can be supposed to agree with *Rome*; and yet all his smooth and oily Oratory, will not persuade the Dissenters that they suffer not from their Brethren.

The difference between the Church of *England*, and *Rome*, is very considerable, it is *Essential*, it constitutes them two distinct Societies, and such as cannot Coalesce without fundamental alterations in *the one*; and yet there might possibly remain some things, which might speak too near an Approach.

I should be loath to be misunderstood; and do question more my own infelicity to cloath my Conceptions with apposite expressions, than the accuteness of the Reader; and therefore I shall give him this general Advertisement to prevent mistakes. I am not concerned to assert, that this Church Approaches too near that of *Rome*; but modestly examining whether the *Enquirer* has proved his Negative, that she does not; and *therefore* does not, because *Cranmer, Ridley, &c.* laid down their lives in Testimony against *Romish* Corruptions. I deny not *the consequent*, but *the consequence*; Not that this Church maintains a due distance from *Rome*; but that it appears true upon *this Reason*, because the bloody Papists put many of her Ancient Fathers, and zealous Children to death, of whose weakness I am the more confident, being assured by good History, That they have most barbarously persecuted and murdered those who differ'd from them in *some single Point*, whilst they held communion with them in *all the rest*.

The Church of *England* (I say it again) is departed from *Rome*, but yet it may be true, *sect. 1.* That some amongst us have laid such foundations, as being regularly and proportionably advanced in their superstructures, will either re-introduce that Abomination,  
or

or condemn *Crammers* separation. In the *grand Debate*, p. 92, 93. The Reverend and Learned Divines lay down these Rules. 1. *That God has given not only a Power, but a Command also of imposing whatsoever shall be truly decent, and becoming his Worship.* 2. *That not Inferiours, but superiours must judg what is truly convenient and decent:* Now allow but the *Pope*, and his Consistory, these favourable concessions, (and it cannot reasonably be deny'd them by those who claim them) and all their Injunctions will be justified, and *Cranmer* with his Brethren found *Will-sufferers*, who charg'd their persecutors to be *Will-worshippers*: The *Pope* commands us to worship an Image, not terminating our Adoration therein, but letting it slide nimbly through that *Medium* to the adorable Object which it represents; and all this as *August*, and *Decent*, and a *great exciter of Devotion*, a mighty mover of *Pious affections*: I suppose my self to be one of those *Inferiours*, who scruple the lawfulness of this practise: He who is my *superposed superiour* asks me, whether I do not own it my duty to *worship God*? I plainly own the Affirmative, but I am not satisfied in the *Mode of Adoration*. He answers readily, *The Modes of Worship* are but *indifferent circumstances*, in their use *very decent*, and commended too by those who have power to *Impose and Judg* what is truly decent: I rejoyn again, This is very strange Doctrine, I have drunk in other apprehensions from my Mothers Milk: but he stops my mouth, and turns me to the very Page, where some of our most eminent Divines of late years do plead on their behalf, what he pleads on his.

But further, he commands Holy Oyl, Holy Water, Consecrated Salt, Cream, Spittle, Insufflations, Exorcisms, with abundance of fine Devices to be used in or with, or in order to Baptism; The inferiour scruples these as meer fooleries, too childish and light to be used in Gods Worship. But the Superiour takes you up: You are not Competent Judges; it belongs to him to impose, and judg what is decent, and such he has judg'd these, and as such imposed them, and your work is not Disputation, but Obedience.

When *B. Bonner* heard, that in our Reformation we had reserved some of the old Ceremonies, he answered with a smile, *They have begun to Taste of our Broth, and in time they'll eat of our Beef*: The old crafty Fox knew well, that where there was a *Nest-Egg* left, the Priests and Friars would *Lay to* it the whole Racemation of their Superstitions.

They that take away a practise, and do not renounce the Principle upon which 'tis built, do but lop off some of the more Luxuriant Branches, whilst the Tree is alive, or turn his Holiness out of doors, and yet give him the Key in's Pocket to return at his leisure, or pleasure: And he might be too hasty that said, *The English forced the Pope out of doors so hastily, that he had not time to take his Garments with him.*

I confess, I have been puzzled what Answer to give to a Cavilling Popish Priest; when he asks so pertly, why the Priest may not put his Fingers in the Childs Ears, in token that it shall hearken diligently to the word of God; why not put Salt upon the Childs Tongue, (methinks I see how the poor wretch screws and twists up its mouth) in token that its Speech shall be seasoned with Salt, as well as make an Airy cross over its fore-head, in token that it shall confess a crucified Christ: If we will give scope to our wanton extravagant fancies, and set our pregnant inventions on work, we might easily excogitate a thousand such pretty ingenious knacks, as might bear some Imaginary Allusion to some Spiritual grace or duty; but amongst them all I wonder no lucky fancy never stumbled upon't, to put a decent Banner, with St. Georges Cross upon't, into the Childs Hand, in token that it shall manfully (and not like a Child) fight under Christs Banner.

2. Qu. *How comes it to pass, that all those of the Roman Communion withdraw themselves from ours, and all true Protestants think it their duty to absent themselves from their Worship?*

Physicians do carefully observe the Indications of Nature; and therefore observing that our Enquirers mind stands strongly inclined to a little pleasantness, why should we check the Humour? How comes it to pass? Truly I neither know that it does come to pass, nor why it comes to pass. I am certain I have read or heard, that for the first 12 years of Queen Eliz. the Papists came to Church; and if they have knock'd off since, and why they have knock'd off, I wait for an Answer from this Enquirer. King Edw. VI. in his Proclamation to the Devonshire Rebels, tells them; *That if the Mass were good in Latin, it could not be bad by being Translated into English.* It could not be objected, as 'twas against the Comedian, *Ex Gracis Bonis, fecit Latinas non Bonas*; This could not be the Reason to be sure. No, no, (says he) *They are commanded so to do by the Head of their Church:* There's the Reason; then what needed all this stir? *The command of a Superiour will bellow, or at least excuse an erroneous Action, as a Trans-*  
cendent

pendent in our Church speaks! and if this Doctrine would but pass, we should have a sweet time on't: Our Superiours must impose, and judg what's indifferent and decent; and we have the easiest life in the world, nothing but to *wink hard*, and *lift up our legs high enough*, and there's no danger.

And yet the Papists learn'd not possibly all this lesson of withdrawing from the Church of *England*, from their own Superiours; they might be taught the Doctrine nearer home: A. B. *Laud* being ask'd by a Lady, *Whether she might be saved in the Romish Communion?* Answered readily, *Madam! You may*; and the good Lady took his word, and ventured it. It's possible it might be the same Lady that Dr. Fuller, *Ch. Hist. B. II. p. 217.* tells us of: She being ask'd by the same Prelate, *Why she had changed her Religion?* Answered, *Because I ever hated a Crowd.* And being desired to explain her meaning herein, she replied, *I perceived your Lordship (it should have been Grace by her Ladiships favour) and many others are hastning thither as fast as you can; and therefore to prevent a press, I went before you.*

What design of Reconciliation with *Rome*, and upon what terms *Grotius* carri'd it on, is pretty well known by this time of day: that he had a Party here in *England*, or expectations of one, his own words testifie. *Aquis multis non displicuisse Grotii propace Labores, Norunt Lutetiæ, & in omni Galliâ multi, multi in Poloniâ, & Germaniâ, in Angliâ non pauci, placidi, pacis Amantes.* Discus. p. 16. There were, I see by this, a company of loving, sweet-natur'd, tractable Souls here in *England*, that would have step'd half way over the Ditch to meet his Holiness: especially since Mr. *Mountagues* time, who informs us, *That the controverted Points (between England and Rome) are of a lower and inferiour Nature, which a Man may be ignorant of, without peril of his Soul, and may resolve to oppose this or that without peril of perishing for ever. That Images may be used for instruction of the ignorant, and excitation of Devotion: And that the Church of Rome has ever continued firm upon the same foundations of Sacraments and Doctrine instituted by God.*

They are not single Instances of those who have not abhorred the Communion of *Rome*, which I could give, but I will spare the living, and cover the dead.

Nor will I say, that these, or such as these were *Papists*; yet methinks they did incline, and warp desperately towards it: there's an odd distinction we often meet with, of a *Sensus Compositæ*, and a *Sensus Divi-*

*Divisus*, which may a little illuminate us : Now because my Readers are not like to be any of the more *deadly learned sort*, I will a little explain the Distinction to their Capacities, by a very familiar, though I confess a very homely comparison : It's impossible (say I) that a Maggot should ever be a Fly ; that is, in your *sensus Compositus*, or so long as it continues to be a Maggot, because these have *two distinct forms*, and the one keeps the other out of possession, whilst it hath a Nail or Tooth to scratch or bite : But now its not only possible, but *easie* for this ~~Maggot~~<sup>Maggot</sup> to become a Maggot, in *Sensu Diviso* ; that is, for the Maggot to strip her self of her old shape, and appear in *another likeness* : I shall be modest in the Application. and hope the Reader will not be immodest : Such persons as I have mention'd could never be Papists, whilst they adhered to the Doctrine of the Church of *England* : but yet such were their disposednesses that way, that the transition was easie, to slide from such loose Principles into Popery, and yet the Church the mean time might be innocent.

3. Quest. *Whence comes it to pass, that the Romish Church have more spight against our Church, than against any Sect or Party whatsoever ?* When it is once well proved that they have so, it will be time enough to enquire why they have so ; but we must suppose one half of his discourse to be true, that we may have leave to answer the other.

The spight of the *Roman Faction* against *Protestancy* as such, has so eminently discovered it self, under whatever denominations they have been differenced, that none of them have cause to boast of it, or be ambitious to taste further of it : It were well improved, if they who are Objects of their implacable spight, could learn to love more, and agree better amongst themselves : The Papists think themselves excusable in *persecuting all* ; when one Protestant so furiously persecutes another, they know no reason why they should love us better than we love our selves ; and truly against whom their spight is hottest, is hard to judg. If we compare the Cruelties of the *Parisian Massacre*, with the butcheries of the *Irish Rebellion*, we shall find the true Reason why they slew more in *Ireland* than *Paris*, was, [because there was more to be slain : The fire may go out for want of matter, but I dare say, never for want of a good stomach to its food : In short, their spight is there the greatest, where they can shew it most : as to one that's very hungry, the biggest Disk is ever the best : The Papists judg of the Object of their hatred, as one did of *Tullies Orations*, the longest is to be sure the most excellent : and yet I conceive

ceive the *Enquirer* to be quite out in this matter. The Papists may spight the Church of *England* upon the account of its fair and vast Revenues, great Dignities, marvellous Honours, Wealth, Splendour, and whatever is desirable to the eye, because hereby the Church is able to vye with her; and yet their malice upon the pure account of Religion, may be greater against other lesser, weaker parties, whose Principles stand more directly in opposition to those of *Rome*: I do not doubt but our *Enquirer* could bring better Arguments than these to prove the distance of Religion between the Two Societies; for this I am sure is too weak, unless it may appear, that their spight is levelled against the Church, meerly on account of those Principles wherein she differs from Dissenters.

4. *Quest.* How comes it to pass, that they of all men most zealously stand in the gap to oppose the return of Popery? That gap at which Popery must enter, if ever it enters into *England*, is the Division between Protestants; and if that Gap were well stop'd, Popery might look over, but would never leap over, or break through the Hedge: This Gap of Divisions is made by the imposition of such things, which in the judgment of the Imposers are indifferent in their own nature; but in the judgment of the Dissenters, sinful in their use and exercise. The Dissenters say, they cannot stop the breach, unless they make a wider in their own consciences: If now they who seem so zealously to stand in the Gap to keep out Popery, would come out of the Gap, and make it up, which else will let in Popery; we shall thank them more for making up one, than standing in, and keeping open a thousand.

I know very well, that many men do oppose the Introduction of Popery, and there's cause for't: There's a Popery that would take away their Wives, and some fear it, and others hope it upon that account: There is a Popery that would subject them to a foreign Metropolitan, and make them trot to *Rome* upon every sleeveless errand; that would let strangers like Locusts and Caterpillars into the Land to eat up every green Herb; that would drain the *Thames* into *Tyber*, and derive all the Blood and Spirits of the Nation into another Channel. *Cæsar* had rather be *Primus in Villâ, quam secundus in Româ*. Every one may sooner hope to learn A B C, than to arrive so far as P: A distance then there is, and yet the opposition against Popery may not prove the distance so great, but there may be too great an agreement: The State of *Venice* did once expel the *Jesuits*, and yet they expelled not Popery; the *French* were long before they enter.



entertained the *Decrees of Trent*, yet still they were *Popish*: I quote them for no more than this, that it's evident there may be *fierce opposition* upon ~~some~~ some particular accounts, when yet there may be a *great Harmony* upon other accounts: Many oppose a Popery coming *Top and Top-Gallant*, that yet would compound for a Popery upon handsome terms.

This last Question has strangely transported him into a most passionate Panegyrick in commendation of *some Church-men*, for some rare exploit or other, which by all the circumstances, must be the procuring the late Proclamation against *Dissenters*: An Act so glorious, that no Age shall ever wear out its memory: This is it which challenges from posterity, Statutes of *Corinthian-Brass*, and will embalm their memories to all succeeding Generations: He had lately exposed the Ignorance of those simple men of *Dort*, that they knew not how to make God just, unless they made him cruel too; and what was their reproach, must now be these mens glory; that they know not how to make the Magistrate great, unless they make him cruel; nor glorious, unless they destroy a considerable part of mankind: Methinks Church-men should not be so ambitious to survive their own Funerals by such Epitaphs, *Here lye they who first taught Religion to be unmerciful*.

This high Encomium is attended in the rear with a severe charge against the Dissenters, That they were instrumental in procuring a toleration and suspension of the Laws for *Popery*: It is true, Conscientious Dissenters desire not the execution of *Sanguinary Laws* upon Papists meerly for their Religion; there are proper ways enow to obviate the cursed tendencies of their principles, without dishonouring our own: Nor ought the modest desire of a sober liberty for the exercise of their own Consciences, to be interpreted an endeavour for a *Toleration of Popery*; they ever hoped that Governours know the difference between *Dissenting Protestants*, who agree with the Church of England in the Essentials of Christianity, and *Recusants* who substantially differ; and the Wisdom of his Gracious Majesty in his Declaration for Indulgence, made a clear distinction between them, though some wise Church-men could not see it.

Protestants however differing in some things from the present establishment, yet have no foreign Interest, no transmarine dependences; they own no Exotick Head that may alienate their affections from their natural Prince and Leige Lord; their private peace and happiness is wrapt up in the general happiness of the King and Kingdom;

dom; any eye but that of Envy might have discovered a sensible difference between these parties.

That Protestant Dissenters were instrumental to procure such a toleration for Popery, is therefore a slander so unworthy, that none would have forged, but they who never baulk an officious untruth, when it may subserve their main design, to render the Nonconformists odious, that so the instruments of their destruction may not be fetter'd with the reluctancy of their restif Consciences.

But we envy not them the Glory, since they aspire after it, of reducing their Brethren to Primitive poverty, because they endeavour Primitive purity; let them enjoy the Glory, that no humble under-woods can grow under the shadow of their spreading Branches; let them take the glory of the Gardiners shears, which snips off every aspiring twig that would mount towards Gospel-simplicity above its fellows: such is the glory of an old aking tooth, that is in insupportable pain, till it may either chew the flesh of the Conscientious, or come under the Discipline of *De la Roche's* instrument. For when His Majesties Grace had for a while tyed them to the *Rack-staves*, they were ready to *break the Bridle* till they could come at the *Manger*. Let it be a Quære then, whether it be more probable to cure, or encrease the old suspicions of some mens inclinations to Popery. That they could never be at ease, whilst their Protestant Brethren had any in their Native Countrey.

*I shall not need to add to all this (says he) That there are as understanding men in Religion, persons of as holy Lives, and of as comfortable consciences of this Churches Education, as are any where to be found in the world besides.*

They who are Masters, or however owners of such comfortable consciences, do surely know what it costs to get, what care it requires to keep, and what torment it is to lose a comfortable conscience. He that shall swear a thousand times by the Great *Osyris*, that he has a comfortable conscience, and yet shall thrust other men upon the *turn-pikes of sin*, and force them to act against their light; that shall rail at, or persecute them for worshipping God according to their convictions of Duty from the Word of God, must give me leave to be incredulous; and earnestly desire him to find out some *Solifidian*. that can believe the Moon to be made of a green Cheese. Let him farther consider.

*Self. 1.* That is not the main considerable in Conscience, that it be comfortable, but that it be so upon solid grounds. The Apostle *Peter*,

1 Ep.

1. Ep. 3. 15. commands us to be ready to render a reason of the hope that is in us. If the reason of our hope, comfort, and confidence, be not as strong, as the building is high, the Towing Edifice will tumble down upon our own heads: It behoves us to be as solicitous about the spring of our comforts, as the sweetness of the streams: And I am the more earnest with this Enquirer to look after the comfortableness of his own conscience, for as for the Religious and Orthodox Divines of this Church, I doubt not both of the purity and peace of their Consciences, because 1. he allows no other Election, than Gods determining absolutely of temporal blessings. p 74. But the Church of England Art. 17. having described a particular Election to everlasting life, from Gods everlasting purpose; tells us, *That the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ.* He then that disowns this Doctrine, must needs want one main ground of a pure and comfortable conscience. 2. They who own Justification by Works, want another bottom of a comfortable conscience. So the Church of England, Art. 11. *Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and full of comfort: All peace then is founded in Grace: In Gods Grace as the Fountain whence it springs, and in the Operations of Grace upon the Soul, as the Evidences of that Grace in God; and though men may bless themselves in Evil, and flatter themselves when they find prosperous Iniquity: yet if any one be a liar, a persecutor, a hater of Godliness, and Godly Men, a slanderer, &c. God speaks no peace to him; and therefore it's more adviseable to boast less of a comfortable conscience, and mind the things that belong to a comfortable importance.*

3. The last pretended cause of the Dissenters withdrawing from the Church of England, is, *A charge against the sufficiency, but especially the sanctity of the Clergy.*

The Dissenters do gladly acknowledg, that the Learning and Piety of very many of the Ministers of the Church of England, is such as deserves an honourable place in their hearts; that they have not such a valuation for some of our Enquirers co-partners, they beg his excuse, till they may see more cogent Reasons to alter their Judgments; when they are in the humour to take a few sorry Sophisms candied over with Rhetorick, to be Learning; or uncharitable censoriousness, crusted over with smooth Hypocrisie, to be Piety, they see nothing to the contrary, but they may enlarge their Charities.

That

That there are many of the present establishment, eminent for sound learning, and exemplary Holiness, who exercise Christian tenderness towards those, who dissenting in conscience, do suffer for conscience, is the rejoycing of their Souls under their great pressures; and they know that the more *Learned and Godly* any person is, the more humble he must needs be: A little knowledg ferments an impotent heart, and makes it intolerably arrogant: but he that knows much, amongst other things must needs know, that he stands in need of mercy from God, and therefore will more readily shew pity to Man: He that knows what a tender conscience is at home, will pity and indulge it, where-ever he meets with it abroad. He that knows much, cannot presume all the World enjoys his measures of Light.

The Enquirer might therefore well have spared this odious and invidious discourse, had he not found it necessary, first to make a Man of Clouts, and then execute it: and yet his Victory cannot be great, in trampling on those that lye on the ground, and can be laid no lower, but in their Graves, for to Hell he cannot send them. Two needless things he will say to this Objection, for he is full, *Et si non aliquâ nocuisset mortum esset.*

1. Supposing this Objection had been true, yet it could not be made by any Protestant, without contradicting his principles. No, why not? Oh, for the Papists are taught, that the efficacy of all Divine Offices depends upon the intention and condition of him that administers: but Protestants are taught it seems otherwise, that the efficacy of all Divine Ordinances depends upon the Divine Institution, and the concurrence of Gods Grace with my use of them

The Reader must give me leave to repeat my former caution, which is always understood, though not exprest, that I deny not the sanctity of the English Clergy; my only task is, to examine the strength of his Arguments, which are sometimes so weak, as would tempt the less considerate to conclude, that cannot be true, which so bold an undertaker cannot make out. His Answer to the Objection is certainly more weak than the Objection it self: For,

*Sect. 1.* When he slanders the Church of Rome, sure the Protestant Dissenters must expect no Quarter: The Papists do indeed hold. That the efficacy of Sacraments depends upon the Intention of the Priest: but that it depends on the condition of the Priest as to Holiness, they assert not: I shall produce one evidence of many. *Totet de instructione sacerdotis*, lib. 1. cap. 92. propounds this Question, *Quando tunc à ministris malis accipere Sacramenta? When, or in what case is it lawfut*

to receive the Sacraments from wicked Ministers? And the very moving of the Question implies, that at least at sometimes, and in some cases it's lawful: but this will more fully appear from his Answers, which he gives, 1. Negatively, *A non-toleratis ab Ecclesiâ non licet ullum Sacramentum accipere etiam necessitatis tempore*: "It's not lawful " to receive any Sacrament from those who are not tolerated by the " Church, no not in case of necessity. Here is Doctrine to his own hearts content, and wherein the Jesuit may assure himself of our Enquirers suffrage. A Nonconformist among them may not baptize, or Administer the Supper, though the Salvation or Damnation of never so many depended on it. And yet when the Casuist thinks better on't, he will except Baptism, and perhaps the other Sacraments in the Article and point of death. 2. Affirmatively, *A malis ministris, dum non sequatur aliquod grave scandalum possumus sacra recipere, Nam Ecclesia ipsos tolerat, & ipsi talia administrantes sibi solis nocent*. "We may receive Sacraments from wicked Ministers (such as he there describes) " provided no grievous scandal follow upon it; for the Church " tolerates such as these; and when they administer the Ordinances, " they hurt none but themselves. Nay he quotes Pope Nick to back him, *Isti sunt sicut fax accensa quæ alios illuminat, & se consumit; & unde aliis commodum exhibent, sibi dispendium præbent mortis*. "These " evil Ministers are like a burning Torch, which enlightens others, " though it waste it self, and destroy themselves by that very means " whereby they advantage others: but at last he comes to this, *Ab his quibus ex officio incumbit, sive sint parati, sive non, licet petere, & accipere Sacramenta, sive ex necessitate sive non, quia ille ex officio tenetur quandocunque petiero ministrare, nec ego jus meum à mitto ex illius malitiâ*. "We may demand and receive Sacraments from those, " whose duty it is to administer, whether they be prepared or not; " whether it be in a case of necessity, or not: because such a one is " bound by virtue of his office to minister when I demand it, and " I cannot lose my right through his malice. Navar indeed tell us, That *Mortale est peccatum Audire Missam, aut Recipere Sacramenta, à notorio Concubinario*. That it's a mortal sin to hear Mass from a notorious Whore-masterly Priest: but honest Suarez corrects that preciseness, and clears it up, that That Prohibition is repealed by the Council of Constance, So that in this one point, the Papists are as Orthodox as our Enquirer can reasonably desire; and have laid no stone of offence at which any one might stumble into separation. They do indeed hold, That Holiness is necessary in a Priest *necessitate præcepti*, and I hope even he will not

not deny that, but that they held it not absolutely necessary, *necessitate medii*, so as that the absence thereof will make a nullity in all Ministerial Acts, and render them utterly void, and of none effect; and that's as much as he can prove. The Papists then are taught no such matter.

*Self. 2.* Protestants may without contradiction to their principles, separate from a person who by Law is vested with all the Tythes, Profits, Perquisites, Emoluments of a Parish whatsoever, whether he be called Parson, Vicar, Curate, if withal he be ignorant, and not apt to teach; Erronius, and does worse than *not teach*; and scandalously prophane, and so does unteach all he taught before. He must have a good stomach that can receive the Sacramental bread from him, out of whose nasty hands I could not take my Corporal Bread without a Vomit.

If a Preacher shall constantly Preach Heresies and damnable Doctrines, such as the entertainment of them would destroy my Soul, must I venture the ruine of it out of civility, and run the risque of being damned for fear of one of those Theological Scarecrows, which men have set up to fright us into compliance? Can I in Faith expect that God will deliver me from Evil, when I lead my self into Temp<sup>t</sup>ation? Can I hope that he will preserve my Judgment untainted, when I expose my self to be practised upon by the cunning insinuations of a sly deceiver, and set my self as a mark for Satan to shoot at? *M<sup>r</sup>. Harding*, I remember, presses the Reverend *Juel* with this, *Be the Bishop of Rome's life never so wicked, yet we may not sever our selves from the Church of Rome.* The Learned man Answers from *Cyprian*, "*Plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis, & Deum metuens. & peccatore præposito separare se debet.*" A People that obey Gods commands, and fear him (not only may, but) ought to separate from a wicked Minister, Art. 4. And yet he understood the Principles of Protestants as well as our *Enquirer*. But let *Cyprianus Africanus* go which way he pleases, we have a greater than he, *Cyprianus Anglicus*, who in his discourse with *Fisher*, from that Text, *Rom. 16. 20. Mark them which cause divisions amongst you*; Observes to us, That *not the Divider, but the causer of the division is the Schismatick.*

The prudence which we use in flying the Contagion of a scandalous Minister, does not imply, that all his Ministerial Acts are meer Nullities, nor that God may not possibly concur with his Ministry to advance my Spiritual welfare; but that a Soul is a Being so precious, bought with a Price so precious, the loss of it so irrecoverable, and my whole concerns embarked in the bottom, that I ought not to expose

it to apparent danger, upon presumption of what God can or may do; for ordinarily we know that God delights to serve himself of the labours of those Instruments, who having dedicated themselves inwardly to the Service of God in the Gospel, do sincerely design, and zealously pursue the glorifying of his Name, in the turning Sinners from their evil ways to God; which we may reasonably suspect of them, whose lives witness, that they have no concern for others Salvation, who have so little for their own.

The Apostle Paul commands his Son *Timothy*, 1 Ep 4. 16. *To take heed to himself, and to the Doctrine*; for in so doing, he should *not save himself, and those that heard him*. More than implying, that the Soul of another will never be dear to him, to whom his own Soul is cheap: As my running from a *Pest-house* does not suppose that all must necessarily dye that come within its walls; but that it becomes a prudent Man to dwell, not where he may possibly escape death, but where he may most probably secure his life: So my withdrawing from an heretical and scandalous Minister, does not imply a necessity of damnation by attending upon his Ministry; but that a Soul is too precious a concern to be put to that adventure.

In all matters of lesser moment we exercise our wisdom freely, without the least scruple in our selves, or rebuke from others. If an Act of Parliament were made by advice of the Convocation it self, that no sick person should consult any other Physician, but only him that dwells in the Parish; nor any one to take advice of other Councillor, than him that dwells in the Vicinage; he that knows how difficult it is to keep and preserve health and estate, how much more difficult to recover them when lost, would without any Prefaces of modesty, take leave to seek out the most experienced in their faculties, and to become a civil Nonconformist to those Injunctions; There's no man but will tell Money after his own Father. and thinks it no incivility that he will see with his own eyes, and not anothers; and why my Soul must be hazarded in a Complement. as if it were the most inconsiderable trifle in the world, I cannot once imagine.

And the rather, because, if *by my imprudent choice* I should destroy my Soul, the sin and guilt will lye upon my self alone; but if I should ruine it by the neglect of timely escape, none can give me security that he will answer for my folly before the Judge of all the Earth.

Nor can it be imagined, that I should be such an Enemy to my own Soul, as to destroy it wilfully; or that any other should have a greater kindness for it than my self; and when I find them not over



tender of my Body, Estate, Liberty, Good Name, Life or Livelihood, which they have seen, they have cautioned me into a jealousy that they can have no such miraculous good will to my better part which they have not seen.

I have heard of a Gentleman, who having a Son fitted by Academic Learning for some serviceableness and employment, was much perplexed within himself, upon what particular Calling to fix for a future livelihood; he consults his Friends, and with them thus debates the Case: If I design him a Physician, he must study long, and gain good experience, before any judicious person will put his Life into his hand, which he values so dear. If I should educate him towards the Law, he must wear out many a year before the wary World will trust an Estate under his management: The only way therefore will be to make him a Minister; for such are the low thoughts men have of their Souls, that they will intrust them with the most raw and unexperienc'd Novice,

Hitherto his discourse has proceeded upon a supposition, that had the Charge been true, yet the Inference he thinks would have been false; but now he comes roundly to the denial of the Charge, and a laborious confutation of it to no purpose.

2. *Combined wit and malice (says our Enquirer) shall not be able to fix any scandal upon the Body of the English Clergy.* I hope they never shall! Nor have I met with any so absurd and disingenuous, as for the sake of some, though many individuals, to cast an aspersion upon a whole society, excepting those who have least Reason. If the Body of the Clergy be Innocent, all the Combinations of wit and malice shall not be able to eclipse their unspotted Innocency, that it shall break more gloriously through those envious Clouds which had obscured its brightness: and if they be Peccant, all the combined Wit and Rhetorick in the World will not wipe away the guilt and filth; it must be Repentance and Reformation that can only be their Compurgators.

1. First then concerning *their Learning*: a thing that has been hitherto indisputable, and may continue so still, if the weakness of this Gentlemans proofs do not render the truth of the proposition suspected. But hear his Arguments.

1. *If the Preaching of the present Age be not better than that of the former, I would fain know the Reason why the Families are in no greater Reputation?* And so would I too! In those Ancient Sermons there are two things especially remarkable, the Phrase or Cloathing, and the

matter or substance of them. 'Tis true, Time and the growing-refinings of the *English* Language have superannuated the former; but why the latter should also become obsolete, I would as fain know a Reason *as himself*; and that *from himself*, who is best able to account for his own Actions: I assure him I would not exchange the *Old Truth*, for *New Phrases*, and *Modern Elegancy*: I had rather see *Plain Truth* in her sober homely garb, than gawdy error spruced up with all the fineries of the Scene and Stage.

The weakness of the *former* Clergy, was the great Reason that introduced both *Liturgies* and *Homilies*. And if the *present* Clergy are grown so strong that they can despise *one of their Churches*, perhaps in time they may go along *without both*. Those Cogent Reasons pretended for the necessity of *the one*, will hold as strongly for *the other*; 'tis full as easie to disseminate Heresies, to vent crude, raw, undigested Non-sense in the *Pulpit*, as the *Desk*.

When I hear any of our *Enquirers* Sermons. I shall summon up my best Reason to make a judgment, whether he has so infinitely out-done the *Ancient Homilies* as he pretends: In the mean time I fear the Language is not so much polished and tricked up, as the Doctrine is defiled; nor have they shamed the Homilies so much in the briskness of Fancy, quaintness of Words, and smoothness of Cadencies, as the Homilies have shamed them in plainness and soundness of Truth. I would mind our Author of the last words of the second part of the *Homily of Salvation*, and though he may mend the *Phrase*, I doubt he will hardly mend the *Doctrine*: So that our Faith in Christ (as it were) saith thus unto us: *It is not I that take away your sins, but it is Christ only, and to him I send you for that purpose; forsaking, therein, all your good Vertues, Words, Thoughts and Works, and only putting your trust in Christ.* In the Homily of the Place and time of Prayer, the Church praises God, for purging our Churches from Piping, Chanting, as wherewith God is so sore displeased, and the House of Prayer defiled. Hence perhaps some would conclude, that the true Reason why we have forsaken the use, is, because we have forsaken the *Doctrine* of the Homilies.

2. Arg. *All Protestants abroad admire the English way of Preaching, insomuch as some forreign Congregations, as I am credibly informed, (that was wisely inserted) defray the charges of the Travels of their Pastors into England, that they may return to them instructed in the Method of the English Preaching.* For the Logick of this Paragraph I shall not so much as examine it: *All Protestants admire English Preaching, for some Congregations send to be instructed in't.* There's the *all* and some

of this Argument. Again, Protestants admire *English Preaching*; Ergo, they admire the *Conformists Preaching*; for all Dissenters Preach in an *unknown tongue*. Again, they send them hither to be instructed in the method of *English Preaching*; all the excellency then lies in the method, which is to Preach *without Doctrine, Reason, and Use*: And now methinks I hear a Pastor of a Congregation in *Holland*, returning home with a flea in his Ear, and giving an account of the expence of his time and charges: *Beloved! we have been sadly mistaken all this while, for our Synod of Dort was a pack of silly ignorant fellows, that knew not how to make God Just, unless they made him cruel; or man humble, unless they made him a Stock or a Stone: As for us, we are informed, that we are not true Ministers of Jesus Christ, as wanting a thing, I think they call it Episcopal Ordination; and if any of us should become Ministers there, we must be re-ordained, though a Priest from Rome shall not need it: and therefore by consequence your Baptism is a nullity, all our Ministerial Acts void and of none effect, your Churches are not true Churches, your Reformation was begun in Rebellion, continued in Schism, and thus I have got my labour for my pains, and naught for my labour.*

3. Arg. *The Preaching of the Church of England is beyond that of Rome.* Yes so it may be, and yet none of the best neither; What sleighty Topicks are these from whence to evince the excellency of *English Preaching*? Commend me to read *one Sermon* in the works of the Learned Bp. *Reynolds*, and it storms the incredulous sooner than a Hundred of these Ridicules put together. But how does it appear that the *English* transcends the *Romish Preaching*? Pray mark the proof: Why *Erasmus* wrote a *Book of the Art of Preaching*, and full of the follies and ridiculous passages in *Papish Sermons*. Most Meridian Conviction! Has not *J. E.* written a *Book* also full of the follies and ridiculous passages in *English Sermons*? Pray then set the *Hares-head* against the *Goose-giblets*. Ah! but *Erasmus* his *Book* is as full as his: very good, and so is his as full as *Erasmus's*: Really when the *Act* comes out against *Metaphors*, I hope there will be a clause in't, that no *Rhetorician* shall ever again use an Argument.

As he would be injurious to the Truth that should take the follies gathered up in this modern Author for the measure of present *Preaching*; so shall he be equally vain, that shall make those imperinencies gleaned up by *Erasmus*, to be the true measure of the *Preaching* of those times: And why may we not charitably suppose that the *Romanists* have furbisht up their rusty *Preaching* since the days of

*Erasmus*, as well as we have scowred up ours since the days of the Homilies?

4. Arg. His fourth Argument is none of the strongest, and yet worth all the rest put together; which were but the vaunt-Couriers to usher in this main one with more solemnity. Compare (says he) but the *Preachings generally in our Churches, with those ordinarily in conventicles, you will find them unequally matcht.*

Though we could be content they were modestly compared, yet we can by no means allow this *Enquirer* to use his own false weights of comparing, and generally such comparisons are odious: None conformists do not affect strong lines, nor are ambitious of the Gigantick Vein and Stile; they study not measured sentences, nor use the Compasses to every decent period; they had rather with their *Austin*, have *A wooden Key that will open the Lock, than one of Gold, which makes a siddling din in the Wards, and yet confounds them.*

None of them but do praise God for the Learning, sound Judgment, solid Preaching, holy Lives, which are to be found among the Conformable Clergy; but can he rear his Triumphant Arches to their praises upon no other foundations, than the ruines of other mens credits?

For my part, I am always apt to suspect that persons credibility, who thinks more to confirm it by two or three ratling Oaths: And I never received it as an argument of her honesty, that carries her tongue so loosely hung, that she deals about most liberally *strumpet and whore.* But I see he is impatient till he compares them.

On the one side you have sound Theology, strength of Argument, gravity of Expression, distinctness of Method; on the other side, nothing more frequent, than puerile, and flat, oftentimes rude, and sometimes blasphemous expressions, similitudes instead of arguments, and either *Apish gestures, or Tragical vociferations* instead of Eloquence. Reader, this Language is pure *Cicero*, I assure thee, *Ex hac enim parte Pudor pugnat, illinc peiulantia, hinc pietas, illinc stuprum; hinc fides, illinc fraudatio.*

I am sorry our *Enquirer* dwells by so very bad Neighbours, that his own mouth must be the very Trumpeter of his praises: If the common Cryer could have been engaged for love or money to proclaim them, no modest man would have done the drudgery. But *nemo patriam suam amavit quia magna est sed quia sua.* 'Tis propriety that renders all things sweet and beautiful: All this had been pardonable, but I see some that love to be *ingenious in aliena fima*, huge facetious upon other mens fames, and perhaps never witty in a Twelve-month, but when they write Satyr.

As all impartial Readers know *one half of his Oratory to be false*: so it's to be feared they may suspect *the other moiety not to be very true*: That's all an *honest man* shall get by being in a *Knaves company*: Truth has sometimes been set in the Stocks, because it has been found under the same Roof with Falshood. He that wishes well to *his own due praises*, let him never desire they should be yoaked with *another's unjust reproach*; lest the hearer knowing *the one unrighteously slandered*, conclude that the other is as *unjustly flattered*. For it's an unquestionable maxime, He that will be a *Sycophant against one*, will be a *Parasite to another*.

Let our *Enquirer* then sweetly enjoy the ravishments of his pleasing Dreams, I shall not awaken him with loud recriminations, only softly whisper that of the Poet.

*Bella es ; novimus ! & Puella ; verum est !*

*Es Dives ; Quis enim potest negare ?*

*Sed dum te nimium, Fabula, laudas*

*Nec Dives, nec Bella, nec Puella es.* Mart. Ep. l. i. 165.

Yet there is one *Salvo* for their credits, with which all the Fraternity of Gentlemen-Raylers do use to bring themselves off, and heal all again, when at any time they have most unconscionably overlash'd: and that is, when they have pour'd out all the contempt and scorn, have heap'd up all the slanders and reproaches that they can make or rake together. then to make an Honourable Retreat, and tell you, they do confess there may be one or two that may be innocent.

God forbid (says our Gentleman) that I should charge all the Nonconformists with such Indecencies. Nay I can tell him more than that: God forbids him to charge *any one* with such Indecencies, unless he had better proof of them: And had he known any individual guilty of these crimes, he should have personally charged *that one*, that he might be brought to Repentance for his prophanation of Gods holy Name, and not involve *a whole party* under the scandalous suspicion: All the charity that these words necessarily contain is, that they are all such *save one*.

Suppose another as charitable as himself should write after his Copy, and when he had with much pleasant Scurrility and Drollery made the Devil sport with the Indecencies of Church-men, should come off at last with this Epanorthosis, *God forbid I should charge all*

*the Conformists with the c extravagancies ; What would it argue, but a more crafty and safe way of Hypocritical Calumny ? Thus I remember a Gentleman once in a frolick, told his Companions, They were all Fools but one ; and when a young Gallant of the knot, more tender of his Reputation than it deserved, and willing to venture more for it than 'twas worth, began to draw, The other takes him aside, and whispers him in the Ear. How do you know but that I intended your self by that single exception ? And this little dust parted the fray.*

Well, I see he is sick till he comes to particulars : *Asahel* would not take *Abners* civil warning ; some men seek mischief to themselves, and all the Friends they have cannot stave them off from the Duel : the more you hold a Coward, the more eager he is to engage : let the man alone, pray let him alone, and in the mean time, I will fortifie my self with patience, that no provocation of his may tempt me to a back blow under the fifth rib ; for how then should I lift up my face to my dear Brethren ?

1. *Their Sermons are generally about Predestination.* About it ? *πρό-  
ον μαθόν ἢ οὐκ* what a word was that for a wise man ? The Church of England in her 17th Article, propounds the Doctrine of Predestination to be believed by us, according to the Scriptures ; that which is the matter of Faith, ought to be the subject of our Preachings, 1 Cor. 4. 13. *we believe, and therefore we speak.* And yet I am confident that our *Enquirer*, and his like, Preach more, Write more, and make more noise about that serious point than the Nonconformists ; I presume I may have heard my share of their Sermons ; and yet I can assure the Reader, I never heard that Doctrine professedly handled in my life : I speak not this in their excuse or commendation ; no, 'tis their just Reproof ; and were I meet to give them their due, I would speedily come out of their debt ; What shall the great Truths of the Gospel, the Articles of the Church of England, the famous St. *Austin* be trampled in the Dirt by the Foot of Insolence ? and shall a pretence of I know not what modesty, unwillingness to offend them that are resolved to be offended, stop your mouths ? Reverend Sirs ! It's high time to awake, and plead the Cause of God, lest he give you up to reproach and contumely, because you have left his Truth so.

If the Reader be so curious, as to enquire wherein lies the great evil of Preaching about Predestination ? he may know, that there is a Preaching about, id. est, *Pro* ; and there is a Preaching about, id. est,

*Con* ;

*Con* ; To Preach *about* it, when it signifies *for* it, that indeed is *sear-*  
*dalous and dangerous* ; but to Preach *about* it, when it signifies *against* it,  
 that indeed is *laudible* ; for it's well known, that when the *Arminian*  
 faction got a little heart in the rising-days of A. B. *Laud*, the Abet-  
 tors of those novelties procured a Proclamation, that none should  
 meddle *about* those controversies, pretending they were *nice School-*  
*points*, unfit for *vulgar Ears* ; but presently the *Arminians* fell pell-mell  
 upon fiery Declamations *against* them.

2. They Preach *about Union with God in Christ*. About it still ! I  
 doubt not but this Gentleman could be willing the Dissenters had free  
 liberty to Preach again, provided they Preach'd about *just no-*  
*thing*. If the Church-doors were unlock'd, the Pulpit-doors set  
 wide open, and their moPths sealed up, and a Padlock hung upon  
 their Bibles, the case would be much the same ; But to speak free-  
 ly, if they did Preach *about* it, at the rates that many Write *about* it,  
 reducing all to a *Politick Union*, e'ne Nail up their Pulpits, and set  
 the Arrow-head upon the doors of their Meetings : 'Tis then no such  
 heinous crime to Preach *about* it, you may Preach *about*, and *about*,  
 and *about* the *Bush* again, provided you never come near it, or doff it  
 off with an *Airy nothing*.

Ay, but the N. C. confess this *Union* to be unintelligible, and they help  
 to make it so. There are many great Truths in the Gospel, which  
 in their heights and depths. in their utmost improvements, we can-  
 not comprehend ; yet such a knowledge of them is attainable, as  
 may whet the edge of our Appetite after more, and in the mean time  
 direct us in our Duties towards God and Man, the perfect opening  
 of which mysteries is reserved for Heaven, when we shall see face to  
 face, and know as we are also known. He that will throw away every  
 object of Knowledge which he cannot *fadem*, must throw away the  
 two great Volumes of *Scripture and Nature* : The Doctrine of the  
 Trinity is certainly owned in the 39 Articles, and yet whatever Key  
 the great engrossers of reason have got to that Tremendous My-  
 stery, in my judgment there's an unintelligible depth in it, for  
 which Faith must lye at the stake, and the veracity of God be respon-  
 sible.

Our Union with God and Christ have been cleared up from the  
 Scriptures, to stay the Stomacks, and give some present satisfaction  
 to the Holy Ardency of True Believers ; and yet though the thing  
 in its own Nature be cognoscible, yet so glorious are the Priviledges  
 that flow from it, such the Mercies which issue out in Eternal  
 Life.



Life, that we freely confess our Ignorance ; *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it enter'd into the heart of man*, (such poor men as we are) to conceive all those Comforts which lie in the bosom of that Relation, and which God has laid up in store for those that are in Covenant with him. *Whatever is received, must be so according to the capacity of the Recipient* ; we do not think that the Ocean can be put into narrow-mouth'd Vessels ; when God shall raise our Faculties, and enlarge our Capacities that we can hold more, he will give more ; and therefore leaving the sublime speculative *Gnosticks* to their own fancies, we shall bless God for what we know, and humbly aspire after greater Measures of Divine Light.

But I suppose we shall hear no more of this Cavil, when they shall please a little to remember themselves of what they have subscribed to, and do daily practise (that is whenever they have customers) in the way of their trade of *Matrimony* ; for there we are told, That *Matrimony* is an honourable state, instituted by Christ in the time of mans innocency, signifying the Mystical Union that is between Christ and his Church : And if they will not be concluded by their own Liturgy, they must rail on their own pace, and when they are weary, perhaps they may be more temperate.

3. They Preach of the sweetness, beauty, and loveliness of Christ's Person. They do so ! and are willing to be Criminal, if this be a Crime ; our Enquirer bewails the want of love amongst Christians ; and if he were as solicitous to enquire into the Reasons of that defect, he would find this to be a main one, That the loveliness of Christ is so much depreciated ; he that cannot love Christ, cannot possibly love a Christian ; since that for which every Christian as such is Amiable, must be that he partakes of those Graces for which Christ is Amiable : It's an humane love that only eyes our own Image, but a Divine Grace that loves the Image of a Saviour : But these things were not reproach in those days, when Ignatius upon every mention of Christ stiled him his Love, *Ὁ ἰσως μου ἱσαύωτα* My Love is Crucified ! But that the Preaching of Christ's Loveliness stirs up sensual Passions, is a note of blasphemy above *Ela*, not to be parallel'd but by the Friendly Debate, whose Dunghill our Enquirer has first Raked, and then Epitomiz'd.

And thus much shall suffice at present to have descanted upon the Ignorance of the Nonconformists Preaching ; Now wipe your eyes, and you shall read a Specimen of his own.

I have seen a Picture of such artificial contrivance, that as we enter'd

enter'd the Room, it presented to us the ridiculous prospect of the *Cat and the Fiddle*; we had not traversed a few paces to the other side, but it was by a strange *Metamorphosis* become a very *Beautiful Lady*: Curiosity drew me nearer to view the Mystery of this *dubious Piece*, and it soon discovered it self a trivial Essay of *Mechanism*: Thus when we enter'd upon this Subject, the *Enquirer* gave us the *Nonconformist*, and his *Preaching in Ridicule*; now turn you twice about, and in a trice the Scene is changed, and you shall have the lively *Pourtraiture* of a *Rational Divine* in all his *Pontificalibus*.

And here first we meet with *Discourses of God, his Nature and Attributes*: Which if some of them found not so, they have left unintelligible: Such a *Nature* as they have contrived, such *Attributes* as they are graciously pleas'd to assign to him; so that *Tertullians* complaint is not more frequently than justly repeated, *God shall not be God, but upon such terms as man shall prescribe*. And then of the *Reason of Religion*. Yes, no doubt you are the men, and all wisdom shall dye with you. What a sad Case had *Religion* been in, if these eminent men had not been rais'd up to set *Religion* upon its proper Basis, and unsettle it from the feeble foundations upon which former Ages had erected it? But then they give us *Arguments for contentment*, under persecution perhaps, such as would make a man weary of his life, and almost Petition to be hang'd. And of *Reverence* too; consisting in uncommanded postures of bowing at the Naming of *Jesus*, worshipping towards the East, and Altar; and of *Submission*, viz. Of *Private Reason and Conscience to the Publick*; But of all, and of all they excel when they Treat of the *Eternal Reasons of Good and Evil*; A Point admirably fitted to the Capacities of the vulgar, which nothing but unskilfulness could make a man bold enough to undertake the unfolding of. *An dantur Aeternæ Rationes Boni & Mali, in mente Divinâ indispensabiles*? Oh how the Ladies sit and admire this profound Theology! Notions which cannot be Characteriz'd better than in *Gondibert's* Phrase, ———— *To charm the Weak, and pose the Wise*. But then they Treat of the nature of *Faith*; And how there's nothing a justifying and saving *Faith* as such, but what the Devils can shew for it: And to conclude, of *Charity* too, to all of their own Cue, to a hairs breadth; with denunciation of Fire and Faggot to all that come not up to their *Apices Favis*, and jump not in with every Iota and Tittle of *Conformity*: I had almost forgot their discourses of *obedience to Magistrates*: I suppose this *Enquirer* has not very long Treated of that Subject;

ject ; the meaning of it is, so long as they are well paid for their pains : *O Emperour* (said one) *Defend me with thy Sword, and I'll defend thee with my Quill* : Could you blame him ? It will cost more to maintain an Army, than a Penny-worth of Quills. Notwithstanding all these Bravadoes, the World must see, if their eyes be not out, that Dissenters give more real obedience to Magistrates for bare life, and uncertain liberty, than some do for all these Revenues which publick Indulgence has loaded them withal ; for when the Finger of the Magistrate is put forth to touch them, *not in skin or bone*, but some sorry Accident, they are ready to make good the Devils charge, and curse him to his face.

2. He has done with the Learning, and will now come to the *Lives of the Clergy* : Whatever good he shall speak of the Clergy, I can heartily agree with him in it, provided he could forbear the disparagement of others : Let it be accorded that *the Lives of the generality of Church-men are unblameable* ; yet *that they need no foyle to set them off*, is such a childish way of wheedling our belief of it, as if a Jeweller should shew you a Stone with its foyle, and then protest it needs none.

Here then needed no Quarrel ; we can rejoyce in, and Bless God for the *Graces*, as well as *Gifts* ; the *Piety*, as well as the *Learning* of our Brethren who differ from us. Nay we can pray to God to double his Spirit upon them in both respects ; and for those who deride the Grace and Spirit of God, we can pray that God would give them a sounder mind : We pray that there may be such burning and shining Lights found amongst all them that profess the Reformed Religion, however in small matters varying, as may confound Atheism and Popery, with whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and Godliness ; but yet this *Compassionate Enquirer*, that he may not be uncivil, nor pass by the door of a Nonconformist without a Salute, will call in, and say a word or two to them. when he has first given us a Reason why he will Treat them like *Christians*.

1. R. Because he will not render Evil for Evil, nor Retaliate the Reproaches cast upon the Sons of the Church ; for he has not so learn'd Christ. And doubtless he that has learn'd Christ to any purpose, either in his Example or Doctrine, must learn quite another Lesson than foul-Language, and black-mouth'd Barking, or he has gone to School to no purpose, and must come back to his Horn-book, and begin at *Christ's Cross*.

2. R. Such uncharitable Recriminations have not only made an Apology for Atheism, and the prophaneys of the Age, but they afford a pleasant spectacle to all wicked men.

3. R. Is taken from the example of Constantine the Great, who when the Bishops and Clergy at the Nicene Council had exhibited a bundle of Libels one against another, burnt them all before their faces, protesting that if he should see one of them in the most scandalous Commission, he would cover his shame with his own Purple.

Being therefore convinced, that all Recriminations are unbecoming the Gospel, and that from the nervousness of our Enquirers Arguments. I will make a reasonable motion, That all the Friendly Debates, the Ecclesiastical Politics, with the foul-mouth'd cabler of Glocesters Cantos, be condemned to the next solemn Bonfire. Unless you will make the Compassionate Enquiry the Protomartyr: And add the Porter, who when he should have covered the scandalous Commission with his Frock, openly exposed it upon his Back.

These Massie Reasons (one would think) might have sunk any ordinary mans railing inclinations into a modest silence, and suspended his proclivity to reviling, *ab officio* for three years; and yet (like a compassionate, self-confident, or self-condemned Enquirer) he will say these two things further in this case. Nay, I did look for it every moment, and that all those Reasons against slander were but a foil to set off Hypocrisy, prophaning of Scripture, and the debauching of his conscience, with a greater Grace, when he shall come to blazon the scandalous Impieties of the Nonconformist Ministers.

And here I first got a satisfactory in-sight into one truth more, That there is the same proportion between the Title and the Book, that there is between his Rhetorick and his Reason. The Title calls the Book, A serious and compassionate Enquirer: but the Book ingeniously calls it self, The ridiculous and passionate Enquiry. And if they thus revile and scold at one another, we must not admire if both joyn in reviling the Dissenters.

1. Two things then he has to say; And the first of them is Three things alone.

Self. 1. If a man be male-content with the Government, and forsaking the Church, resort to private Assemblies, such a man may debauch his life too, and yet have a very charitable construction among the generality of Dissenters. That is, if a man will be a Rascal in one particular, he may be a villain in all the rest, provided he become a Nonconformist: Ay! *Sit Sacrilegus, sit fur, sit visiorum omnium flagitiorumque* prin-

princes--*At est Bonus Fanaticus!* Come but over to *their way*, and you may Lye, and Steal, and Whore, and Drink, and be Drunk! this was spoken without all peradventure out of *tenderness of conscience*, to fulfil that *Royal command*, of *not rendring evil for evil*; That it might appear how well he had *learned Christ*. But let him know, that they allow *no Conformity*; to compound for *severe Piety*; nor dissent from *Ceremonies*, to substitute *assent to the substantials of Christianity*. He that is not brought over to the Obedience of the Gospel, is with them no Christian, by what *Name or Title* soever he be dignified or distinguished; and I seriously desire, that this over-charged slander may not recoil, and hurt the Enquirer.

But though he be very uncharitable, I shall endeavour to give the most charitable construction of his words that they will bear: And therefore observe, That though he be engaged *not to render evil for evil*, yet he never promised *not to render evil for good*.

*Señ. 2.* If being a *Clergy-man* (says he) and continuing in the Church, he shall debauch his Office, and undermine the Church which he should uphold; such a man (also) may then debauch his life too, and yet have a very charitable construction among the generality of Dissenters.

What must Enemies expect from this Man, who has no mercy on his Friends? There are many Holy and Learned persons, now within the Bosom of the Church, who having considered the terms of enjoying the more publick exercise of their Ministry, have overcome the difficulties of Subscription; and do yet retain their former Orthodoxy, and sobriety of Conversation; These persons knowing what Conscience is, do exercise great tenderness towards it in their Brethren, who cannot get over their rubs and obstacles; and these, if I mistake not, are the Glory of the Church of England, for purity of Doctrine, and piety of Conversation; for all true Learning, and useful knowledg; Against these persons, the Enquirer has a desperate stich, as those that undermine the Church which they should uphold: that is, if they condescend never so little to a tender conscience, in one of those little institutions which themselves call indifferent, the whole Church must presently fall about their Ears: but if the Church were built upon Christ the Rock, and not upon the Wool-packs of Ceremonies, such condescension would never undermine it. These are taxed also with debauching their Office. And indeed if the Office of Ministers be to become Informers, If Preaching the Gospel be nothing but to make a patcher about Ceremonies, I hope they will debauch it still; but that  
any

any of these do debauch *their Lives*, and are thereupon *more acceptable to Dissenters*, is a loud falsehood, only to let us understand how well he has learned Christ.

*Sett. 3.* If a man (says he) be of the most Holy Conversation, but Zealous for the interest of the Church, this man shall have worse Quarter from the fiery Zealots of other parties, than one of a more loose life, and meaner abilities. Let no man reply, If a man be of a loose Conversation, and but Zealous of the Grandeur, and for the Ceremonies of the Church, this man shall have fairer quarter, and more encouraging preferments, from the fiery Bigots of Conformity, than one of a severe life, and greater ministerial abilities. To interpret this mystery, we must inform our selves, what is the Churches true interest as it is a Church: It's very easie to mistake in stating the True interest of any Society; and if we mistake there, it's impossible we should be regular in the means of pursuing it. *An error in the first concoction is never rectified in the second:* The true Interest of every true Church of Christ, is to promote Holiness and conformity to his commands, engaging thereby his presence and protection; and a Spirit of Love and Peace among its members, though under some variety of apprehension in Adiaphorous matters: The mistake is to advance a Churches secular Grandeur, external splendor, and worldly pomp, which every true Christian in his Baptism has renounced, together with all the works of the Devil, and the lusts of the flesh: If ever a Church shall be so far mistaken as to judge worldly Glory, its true interest, I know not why it may not also mistake the works of the Devil, and the lusts of the flesh to be its true interest also: A conforming Minister, who despising *this false*, understands and pursues *this true* Interest, is truly dear to all the Nonconformists; but for those who are so deluded as to think, it lies in destroying and ruining all that are not satisfied with their Canons and Constitutions, however aliene and forreign to the temper of the Gospel, they confess they are no great admirers of them, whatever appearance of Holiness they may make: If the Interest of a Faction shall lie in sending poor Christians to the *Aims-house* of Newgate, and the *Hospital* of Bedlam, and will give no Quarter to the most Holy and Religious, if they fail in two or three Niceties; I must needs say I see no reason why such should adorn themselves with the plumes of Gravity and Devotion, to render their inhumanity more plausible.

2. But he has somewhat further to say than all this: If impatient and fantastical talking of Religion, endless scrupulosities, censorious

and rash judging our Superiours, Melancholy sighing, going from Sermon to Sermon, without allowing our selves time to meditate on what we hear, or to instruct our Families, be the main Points of Religion, then the Non-conformists are Holy men. And now I hope the Reader is abundantly satisfied, that the Enquirer has otherwise learned Christ, than to render evil for evil: That he dares not furnish Atheism and Profaneness with an apology: That he makes a conscience of affording a spectacle to evil men: That he dares not (for a World) dress Religion in a Phantastical Habit, that Boys may laugh at it: This is his Constantines Robe which he casts over scandalous Commissions.

Serious discourses about the concerns of the World to come, about our own death, and the day of Judgment, is Phantastical talkings, Tenderness of Conscience, Holy fear of sinning against God, is endless scrupulosity; Modest refusal to practise every thing commanded, though Reason, Judgment, Scripture Reclaim, is censuring and rash Judgment of Superiours. Godly sorrow must be melancholy sighing; attending upon Gods Word Preached, shall be running from Sermon to Sermon: And a downright falshood added to close up the whole: That they neither allow themselves time to meditate of what they have heard, nor to instruct their Families: And yet if they shall dare to practise this last, with a few of their weaker Neighbours that drop in to hear a Sermon repeated, they shall be lyable to the Law, and punished as Seditious Conventiclers, and railed at as Schismatics.

When all is said and done, Machiavils old Rule is a Sacred Maxime with these sort of Men; Fortiter calumniare, aliquid adharebit: Throw Dirt enough, and some on't will stick: Wild-fire flies further than the Water that should quench it: A reproach will run, where a just Vindication will not creep. Had the Providence of God allotted the Nonconformists their abode any where but amongst those whose Interest it is to render them Odious, they might have pass'd for good Christians: It would be difficult to bide Men to be Instruments of cruelty, if they were not first perswaded, that they are Ministers of Justice; and the only way to perswade that, is to represent Dissenters as the off-scowring of all things, not fit to live a day. The best way to take away the life, is to render it abominable. None can handsomely be destroyed, till they be dress'd up in a Malefactors Cloaths. And it seems as much for their Enemies Advantage to make them seem wicked, as 'tis for theirs to be really Holy.



## C H A P. I I.

*Of the more Remote causes of the infelicities of this Church: The Persecution under Q. Mary: The bad provisions for Ministers in Corporations: Frequent Wars: The mischiefs of Trade and Travel: The Designs of Atheists and Papists enquired into, with what influence they may have had upon the present Separation from the Church of England.*

**W**HEN Adrian VI. was pressed by the clamorous Importunity of the German Princes to reform the Clergy, he answered very gravely, That a Reformation was necessary, yet the danger of Reforming all at once was so dreadful, that he resolved to proceed step by step. Some wise Men smiled at the cautious advisement of his Holiness, and said, They hoped he would not break his shins for haste, but deliberately make a hundred years at least between every step.

The same prudence which this politick Pope used in his advance towards a Reformation, our wary Enquirer uses in his approaches towards the causes of Separation. Hitherto we have been entertained with certain Romantick Imaginary causes, and now he will give us a gentle Treat with the Real ones.

But of these some are more remote, others near hand; these come by the running Post, those by Tom Long the Carrier. Thus your Poching Fellows, when they have found the Hare sitting, go round about and about the Bush, till they have screwed themselves into a convenient Distance, and then give poor Puss Club-Law, and knock her dead upon the Form.

1. Now the first of these Remote causes is; That it was the misfortune, and is the great disadvantage of this Church, that it was not well confirmed, and swaddled in its Infancy, it confided with Serpents in its Cradle, and underwent a severe persecution:

What he understands by that old blind heathenish Beldamie Fortune, I cannot tell. The Scriptures have taught us to believe, That the Hairs of our Head are all numbed; and therefore much more the Heads of the Martyrs: That a Sparrow falls not to the ground without the Providence of our Heavenly Father: Much less the blood

of the Saints, which is more precious in his sight than many Sparrows. But this is only a Shibboleth, which serves for a Certificate that he is no friend to the immutable Counsels of God.

However this early Persecution must needs have a considerable influence upon the Churches present weakness; for thus Mephibosheths Nurse making more hast than good speed, in her fright and sight threw down her Nursery, and he became lame to his dying day.

It was therefore politickly done of Licurgus (thinks the Enquirer) when he had framed the body of the Spartan Laws, to pretend an occasion to Travel; and having first taken an Oath of the people, that they should make no alteration in that Government (either in the Church or State) till his return, he resolutely never returns again.

If the old Masters of Ceremonies could have perswaded the people to some such subscription that they would never alter their Inventions till their return, and then had sentenced themselves to a voluntary perpetual Exile, it had been a successful piece of self-denial to cheat a Nation into Uniformity, no less honourable to themselves than grateful to thousands.

But thus the case stood with the Church in its Infancy. King Edward VI. dying Immaturely, (too soon says the Enquirer, too late says Dr. Heylin) Q. Mary succeeded him in the Throne, and so the Church was put upon difficulties and trials, before its Limbs and Joints were settled and confirmed.

Persecution has hitherto been esteemed one of the Churches best friends, whereof it has been often afraid, but never hurt: Such was the constant experience of the Primitive Christians: *Exquisitior quæque crudelitas illecebra magis est sectæ, plures efficitur quoties metimur, sanguis Martyrum est semen Ecclesiæ.* The cruelties of Enemies does but more encrease the number; the oftner the Church is mowed down, the thicker it comes up, and ther's no Seed thrives so well as that which is steeped in the blood of Martyres. That which Christians lose by the wind of persecution, is only their chaff, that which the fire of Tribulation preys upon, is only their Dross. The Marian Fires did the Church this one good turn, that it melted down much of that imposing Spirit and Lordly Temper, which reigned in some Church men over their Dissenting Brethren, which Bishop Ridley confessed at the Stake: That Tree which is of Gods Planting, takes deeper Root by staking; and if it loses any Ceremonious Leaves, let them go, the Tree will bear better and sweeter Fruit without them.

Could

Could Persecutors have seen *how much good* the Wise God would extract out of their evil, they would never have aggravated *their own damnation*, to be the instruments of the Christians *Salvation*: But malice is so quicksighted to do mischief, that it's blind in the reasons of doing it; and makes such haste to her end, that she stumbles in the means; Thus Nero's fingers itch'd to the burning of *Rome*; but that he knew it would arise a more glorious *Phoenix* out of its *own Ashes*; which could the Devil himself consider, he would never be content *Tribulos metere, dum nobis spinas ferit, to sow us Thorns, and reap himself a crop of Thistles.*

All this while we are waiting to see how he will make it out, that *This early Persecution* did any *real hurt* to our *Infant Church*? And after some Preambles and Introductions, he will doubtless come home to the point: And first, *By reason of this Persecution* (you must understand) *a great number of the Ministers, and other Members of this Church, were driven into other Countries for refuge and shelter from the Storm.* I hope their finding refuge and shelter was no part of their misery: but it was seasonably remembred, for if the Ministers and other Confessors of this Church, found such Cordial Entertainment amongst the Reformed Churches beyond the Sea, if ever the like sad providence should send them hither, they may expect to meet with proportionable welcome, and not be remitted with their Beards half shaved, and their Coats dock'd, with a Paper pinned at their Backs, intimating that they are Fugitives, Schismaticks, and Rebels.

But still, *Quid hoc ad Iphicli Boves?* What is all this to the matter? Oh now it comes! *There they were tempted with Novelty, and distracted with variety of Customs and Rites, before they were well instructed in the reasons, or habituated in the practice of their own.* And hereupon they brought home with them *foreign fashions*: The meaning is this, Reader! Religion travelled too young and raw, and drunk in the Ceremonies of the Reformed Churches, and she cannot be dis-infected to this day: A little matter will blow this dust out of the Readers Eyes, and let him see the egregious trifling of this Harangue.

§. 1. He supposes that those exiled Confessors, did but chop or Barter one Ceremony for another; as suppose they carried out with them *The Cross*, they exchanged it for *Cream*, or if they went out in the *Surplice*, they returned home in the *Friers Coule*; As if the Competition had been between *two Ceremonies*, which as *Candidates*

*didates* vyed which should be most for Edification, and the adorning Religion: whereas they who improved their afflicted state to the best advantage, left their Ceremonies behind them, and brought no other home in their rooms: Alas! to what end should they bring more to *England*? This had been to *carry Coals to New-Castle*; or to what end steal from the Reformed Churches; which had been meerly to *rob the Spittle*.

§. 2. Those Holy Men made not the Forreign Churches the *Rule or Reason* of their Reformation in worship; but *their help* to lead them to the *common Rule* of Reformation; They that were reduced to *Primitive poverty*, might be allowed to emulate *Primitive purity*. It was no wanton humour, but a sence of Dury, begotten by awaken'd Conscience, rouz'd up by their affliction, which brought them to a self-denying compliance with the Institutions of Christ: It would break the proud heart of them that live in *Ease and Triumph*, to *imitate their patience and resolution*, whose *return to Gospel-simplicity*, they can so pleasantly deride.

§. 3. It's a scandalous reproach which he throws upon the *English Reformation*, as if it lay in *Rites and Ceremonies*, and such kind of inventions. *Before* (says he) *they were well inured to the English Reformation, they became enamoured of the Rites of other Churches*: The Reformation lay not in *preserving Rites and Ceremonies*, but in *purging* them away: so far *purged* so far *reformed*; you may call the *Scar upon the Face*, its *Healing*, if you please: but I will rather chuse to call it, a *foot-step or relique of the old former wound*: nor will I call the *dust behind the door* part of the *Houses cleanliness*; and yet I dare not impose, let others call them as they please: this is evident that those things wherein the Reformation consisted, were opposed by the Papists, but the Ceremonies were not opposed by the Papists, therefore our Reformation consisted not in Ceremonies.

§. 4. No less is the reproach cast upon those famous Exiles, that they were *enamoured of the Rites of other Churches*; we read indeed, 2 *Kings* 16. 10, 11. That King *Ahaz* in his Journey to *Damascus*, saw an *Altar* there, which pleased his Humor, and he sent to *Urijah the Priest*, the *fashion of the Altar*, and the *pattern of it*, according to all the *workmanship of it*, and he like a tractable good-natur'd man, that would not offend the King for a small matter, *built an Altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus*: but our banished worthies imitated not the Example; it was

not the opposing one Ceremony to another, but the opposition of all Ceremonies, which was their glory.

BUT our Enquirer is resolved they shall be in an Errour; and which looks something like Charity, he will convince them of it too.

1. Their first weakness was, That they considered not whether those other Rites were better, so long as they were newer and fresher. A groundless charge! New or old, fresh or stale, was nothing to them, it was Ceremonies as such which they rejected: and if he can evince, that the present Dissenters have derived from the Transmarine Churches any Rite or Ceremony, which is not of Divine Institution, they are not so enamoured of it, but they will presently deliver it up into his hands to be dealt with at discretion.

2. Another failing was, that they observed not, That there are oftentimes reasons to make one form necessary in one place or people, and not in another, when its possible they may be both indifferent.

They observed without his information, that the circumstances of time and place in general, were indifferent; but they observed not, that new invented Rites were necessary in any time or place, to represent the grace and duty of the Gospel; they knew well, that all Christs Ordinances were *decently to be administered*; and they knew as well that there was no need to institute new Rites and Ceremonies to create a decency, to conciliate a respect or reverence to any of Christs Ordinances: If we must have new Rites, to render Christs ceremonies *decent and comely*, then we must have new Rites also invented to render those *humane Ceremonies decent and comely*; and so infinitely forwards: others to make those latter *decent and comely*: because we cannot imagine the wisest man on earth able to contrive a more perfect Ceremony than Christ has done: And thus we must have a *Lace* to make the Garment *decent*, and then an *edging* to make the *Lace* *decent*; and then we shall make Religion a *Suit*, as fantastick as that Prince's, who fitted it with *Loop-holes*, like *Argus* his Eyes, and then hung a *Needle* at every *Loop-hole* to make all *decent*.

I have heard of a Taylor (from France no doubt) that was sent for to take measure of, and make a Corderobe for the Moon; she was then very slender, as being in conjunction with the Sun; and when at the fortnights end he brought her home her Gown, she was grown so corpulent, that it would not meet by a third part of her

her circumstance; the poor man was sadly ashamed, blamed his Spectacles, and with more circumspection takes measure of her Ladyship, and when he came to try her *Stays*, she was grown so slender, that she looked like a shrimp in a Lobsters Symar: Now the Moon is the Church, which according to the measures which our modish Fashion-mongers take of her, must at every change and Full, appear in new accoutrements: And as Nations have differing Attires each from other and the *Winters freeze* differs from the *summers Stuffle*; so the same Church must have a *Mourning Worship* and a *Wedding-Worship*, accommodated to her outward accessions or declensions in wealth and Riches.

The external Condition of the Church does vary, but her God is the same; her joy may be turned into sorrow, her sorrow into joy; she has her fasting, as well as her feasting dayes; solemn Humiliations solemn Thanksgivings, but her *Worship* continues still the same; Though the *Worshippers* may alter their garb, yet the worship which respects the immutable God is immutable like himself: If new things pleased our God, it were our duty to study new things. If he shall declare for *Summer-Ceremonies* and *Winter-Ceremonies*, we must provide accordingly; but if with him there be no variableness nor shadow of turning, that worship and service which we offer to him, ought to observe the same fixedness and stability,

3. Another of their follies was, that they could not hit upon the right Rule of Reformation. It was their unhappiness, that this Enquirer was not then born to direct them to it, which advantage the present age may enjoy, if we be not wanting to our selves; And it is this: That those differing forms be fitted to the Humour, and custom of the People, and made consonant to the civil Constitutions: A Rule had need be strait, or else what ever is framed by it will be cracked: Now 1. For the Humor of the People: This has sometimes the sad fate to be decryed as the cause of Deformation, and now the happiness again to be as much cryed up for the Rule of Reformation; which if it be varied according to the ebbing and flowing of this Euripus, must needs be changed half a score times in four and twenty hours. 2. Custom has I confess a fairer plea, some persons of no small learning pretending it to be the only rule of decency, in things indifferent. In p. 31. our Enquirer intimates That the Constitutions (of a Church) by time are digested into Customs, and made natural. Now if Custom be the only rule of decency, then the Churches constitutions ought to be of no things but what are natural.

*ed to a People by Custom, and thereby made decent also, unless he has a power also to command all things to be done undecently, and then leave them to be made comely by long usage and continued Custom but if the Churches Constitutions, her power to impose and judge what is decent be the Rule of Decency, and the Reason of our Obedience, then Custom is not the only Rule of Decency.*

How much better were it that the peoples *fluctuating Humors, odd Customs, and the Churches Constitutions*, were all regulated by the *Word of God*; which is *Equal, Infallible, and Impartial*? *Equal*, and therefore we shall not be to seek of our worship upon every accident; *Infallible*, and therefore we may safely confide in its direction; and *Impartial* and so abets no Party, favours no Faction or worldly Interest, but faithfully and fully delivers out to us the mind and will of God: Whereas our Enquirers rule, must prove the Author of all mis-rule and confusion amongst the Churches of Christ, when *Humours* shall cross *Customs*, *Customs* thwart *Humors*, and perhaps *civil Constitutions* shall retrench both *Customs* and *Humors*.

One instance will a little enlighten us in his design and meaning. *Where (says he) the Reformation had not at the first the Countenance of the Civil Government, there the Reformers were constrained to enter into particular confederacies with one another, from whence Presbyterian Government seems to have taken its rise. Say you so? Then I know who will assume; but for the first three hundred years after Christ all along through the purest Primitive times, the Christian Reformation had not the countenance of the Civil Government, and therefore they enter'd into particular confederacies; from whence the Presbyterian Government had its rise, I cannot certainly tell, and therefore dare not conjecture, whether these particular confederacies, be not a kind of new Latin for the solemn League and Covenant; but this I will say, that the thanks of the Classis are ordered to be returned to this Gentleman for his learned Argument to prove the Presbyterian to have been the Primitive Church Government.*

All this while it remains a great mystery, *how these poor Exiles prejudiced the English Reformation*; And therefore in the first place he will give us some light into it by a plain and familiar illustration, *As the Children of Israel, even when they had bread from Heaven, Angels Food, longed for the Onyons and Garlick of Egypt, remembering how sweet they were to them, under their bitter bondage; so these Men*  
retain



retained as long as they lived a lingering after those entertainments which they found then very pleasant, when the other was denied them. The foundation of this ingenious illustration lies in these two things. First, That the Rites and Ceremonies of England were *Manna, Bread from Heaven, Angels Food*: And Secondly, That the worship of the Reformed Churches without these Ceremonies were *Onions and Garlick*; he must have an Ostrich stomach that could concoct them, unless they were first macerated, and dissolved in a *Menstruum* of Ceremonies: Now the parallel is so self-evident, that we shall only need to gather what drops of it self, and not to shake the Tree; For 1. As the *Manna* was of Gods own appointment, so we must not question but the Ceremonies also were. 2. The *Manna* was *Angels food*, and as whenever Angels will cloath themselves with a *Garment*, they cannot assume one of more congruity than *light*; so whenever they shall please to condescend to a *Treat* from Men, they cannot be served up with a more agreeable Dish than Ceremonies. And then 3. As the *Manna* was despised and accounted *dry meat*, so are these Ceremonies too; and therefore as wise Fathers take away the Childrens Meat, if they will not eat their Bread, so the Fathers of the Church think it wisdom to deny their Children Spiritual Food, if they will not down with the Ceremonies, or let them fast till they have a better Stomach: But the parallel comes off very lamely at last: For the *Manna* lasted only while the Church was in the *Wilderness*, and ceased, as soon as they entered the *Land of Canaan*; whereas the poor afflicted and persecuted Churches knew none of those Rites, but surfeited of them in the day of her Rest and Prosperity: And therefore to have carried on the humour, he might have feigned one thing more as well as all the rest; That those exiled Worshippers lived all the forty years of their Banishment upon nothing but Rites and Ceremonies, but when they came to the Land of Promise, the *Manna* ceased.

We have heard a long Narrative of the cause of Nonconformity from the Exiles in *Queen Marias* dayes: which had it been delivered without colour or fraud, had amounted to no more than this naked little. When the Righteous God saw it necessary to unchain the Devil, and to let him loose upon the *English* Protestants, to exercise their Graces and correct their Follies: he gave some of them *Christian courage* to abide by the tryals, to others of them *Christian wisdom* to secure themselves by flight: Had all fled, the

Truth

Truth had wanted *Witnesses at home for the present*; had *all stay'd*, the Truth had wanted *Successors for the future*; they that fled, found the *care of God* attending them, and the *Mercy of God* as a harbinger going before them, to provide them first a *Room in the hearts*, and then in the *Houses of their Brethren*: Where being emancipated from the prejudices of *inveterate custom*, got from under the *dureſs of imposing power*: humbled by afflictions, and made more willing to bear the *Yoke of Chriſt*, and finding the Reforming Churches a tolerable *Counterpane* of the New-Testament Worship, many of them *not consulting with flesh and blood*, came off from Ceremonies, content to worship God with the same measure of Decency prescribed and practised by Chriſt and his Apostles.

When therefore he tells us, that those *Exiles received a tincture of those other Rites*, before they had well imbibed, or sufficiently understood the *Reasons of the Church of England*: He ſays no more, then that the *Rationale of the Lyturgy*, and the *Compassionate Enquiry*, were not then written: for where else to find the *Reasons of the Church* for imposing Ceremonies, I am yet to seek.

2. A second cause of this evil effect is, the *bad and incompetent provision made for a learned and able Ministry in the Corporations, and generality of the great Parishes in England*.

But before this *Incompetency* can poſſibly be remedied, it muſt be known what is a *competency* for a learned Minister? for ſome that are learned enough, are alſo able to ſpend five times more than the people are worth, or can ſpare.

Two things are here conſiderable, which have exerciſed our *Enquirers Politick Head-piece*.

The *Grievance*, and the *Redreſs of the Grievance*.

1. For the *Grievance*, *The multitude of Opinions that deſorm and trouble the Church are generally hatch'd and nurſed in the Corporations and Market-Towns*. Nay not only the diſſatisfaction with the *rites and ceremonies*, but the *convulſions and confuſions of the State*, took their *Origin from the bad humors of thoſe greater Societies*. But how eaſily might all this miſchief have been remedied, had he purſued his own *Primitive Rule of Reformation*, viz. *Modeled the Rites and Government of the Church to the humors and cuſtoms of the People*: But his meaning was, That Reformation ſhould be accommodated to the *humors of the Villages*, where the People mind nothing of Religion (as he thinks): but not of the *Market-Towns*, where they are intent upon *new Faſhions*: But the Reader muſt look on theſe

as the lesser sports of his wit, and the dilatations of a pregnant Fancy ; for the true Reason of all the dissatisfaction about those Rites, has been the want of good ground for them in the Word of God ; and the main cause of the troubles that have ensued thereupon, has been the unreasonable and unseasonable imposition of them upon the Consciences of Men.

But our *Enquirer* is otherwise minded, and he imputes these convulsions and confusions,

S. 1. *To the Fulness and Luxury of these great Towns.* Well ! have a little patience till he can procure his Proclamation against Trade, and to shut up the Shops, and that will most effectually take down their Grease, and humble their haughty stomachs, and they will grow tame and manageable : But then another difficulty will arise, how they should maintain a *learned and able Ministry*, and allow him *such a Revenue*, as he shall confess to be a competency : but is not this inconvenience to be found in the Country Towns and Villages ? No ! They are for the most part quiet, and peaceably comply with *establish'd Orders* ; for they are tired with hard labour, and never trouble themselves nor others, but apply themselves to till the ground, and earn their bread with the sweat of their Brows. Let them have liberty to be poor and pay their Tythes, and they concern themselves little in Religion or the saving of their Souls : they go by the old Rule. *Si Mundus vult vadere sicut vult, Mundus debet vadere sicut vult* : These Creatures indeed will make fit materials for Uniformity to work upon : you may put the bridle in their mouths, and clap the Saddle on their backs, and ride them till they are broken winded and foundred, and they will neither wince nor complain : and yet there are some sower Lads and knotty peices among these too, that will not budge a foot, nor yield an Ace further than Conscience informed from the Word of God shal command them.

S. 2. In these great Towns they have leasure to excogitate Novelties, and spirit and confidence to abet them : and here there is great concourse of People, where Notions are more easily started, and Parties sooner formed for the defence of them : Where the dividing Notions have been most started, I cannot infallibly tell ; but I am sure the richest Corporations find themselves something else to do than to excogitate Ceremonies, or other Novelties ; and whether Convocations have alwayes sat in the great Towns or little Villages, is easily determined.

3. The

§. 3. The misery of all is, That in these great Towns where was most need of the most liberal maintenance, so pitiful a pittance is left to the Curate or Minister, that he can scarce afford himself Books to study, nor perhaps Bread to eat, without too servile a dependence upon the benevolence of his richer Neighbours, by which means either his Spirit is broken with adversity, or the dignity of his Office obscured, or he tempted to a sordid connivance at, or compliance with their follies, and so like Esau sells his birthright for a Mess of Pottage.

The bottom of the grievance in plain terms, is this : If the Clergy could but once procure a Revenue settled hard and fast upon them to their minds, (which what it is, neither we, nor perhaps themselves ever knew) had they but more wealth to support their Grandeur out of the hard labour of the poor drudging Moyls, that tug hard night and day to get bread ; had they but *Midas* his Option or *Fortunatus* his wishing-Cap, that every thing they touch might be gold ; they would then make the Blew-aprons lacquey it, and trot to the Courts by their Horse sides, and it does them good but to imagine, how they would firk their lazy Hides, and curry the scabbed humour of Nonconformity out of them : Thus much of the *Malady* ; the *Remedy* follows.

2. The Remedy of this insupportable Grievance, in short, is this : That a Law be made that all Corporations, Market-Towns, and great Parishes provide a maintenance for the Vicars, in proportion to London ; for till some such course be taken, it will be in vain to expect, that the Church of England, or the best Laws of Religion, should either obtain just veneration, or due effect.

So far am I from envying them their Honors, Revenues, and desired Affluences, that I could be content they had the nine parts, and the poor tenth only left to the Landlord, as a small quit-rent in memory that the whole was once his own : But what security can we have, that that also will not be demanded in time to make up a Competency ? for Trade is too great, Corporations too rich, every one has too much, only the Clergy have just nothing till they have got their Competency, which is nothing less than the whole.

This was the glorious design managed by the Council of Trent, when the Church was so unmeasurably rich, that it maintained abundance of Cardinals, every one carrying the Port and State of a King ; so many Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Priests, besides the infinite numbers and swarms of Religious Persons, all endowed with ample Revenues, and yet they made a *begging De-ree* ; much would have

have more; *Cujus avaritia totus non sufficit Orbis*, That all the faithful should be exhorted to give largely to the Bishops and Priests to maintain their dignities. But the Parliament of Paris, a wise and foreseeing Assembly, abhorring the Mendicant Trade, and knowing well, that your counterfeit Beggars hide luxury under the covert of Rags, and remembring possibly that of Solomon, Prov 13. 7. *There is that maketh himself poor, and yet there is no end of his substance*: gave this censure of it.

\* That this had been good indeed, if they did serve the people as they ought, and were really in need; for so St. Paul exhorts, \* That he that is instructed should give some part of his goods to him that instructs him: but when he that bears the name of a Pastor, does intend any thing rather than to instruct the People, the Exhortation is not proper; and the rather because Ecclesiastical goods formerly were for maintaining the poor, and redeeming Slaves; for which causes not only the immovables, but even the Ornaments of Churches and holy Vessels were sold. \* In the Mosaiical Law God gave the Tenth to the Levites, who were but the 13th. part of the people: but the Clergy now, who are not a 15th. part have gotten already the 4th. part, and doth still proceed to gain, using many Artifices therein. Moses having invited the people to offer for the service of the Tabernacle, when as much was offer'd as did suffice, forbade them in the name of God to offer any more; but here will be no end found till they have all, if men will continue still in the Lethargy: If some Priests and Clergy men be poor, it's because others are excessively rich, and an equal distribution would make them all rich abundantly, *Hist. Trent. Counc. p. 821. Again Ib. p. 540.* For a Synod to put their hands into mens purses to maintain Curates, seemed strange, both for the matter and manner; for the matter because the Clergy was superfluously rich, and rather indebted to the Laity; for the manner, because neither Christ nor his Apostles did ever compel men to make Contributions, but only gave power to receive them that were voluntary; and he that reads St. Paul to the Corinthians & Galatians, shall see the Masters treatment of the Ox, that treadeth out the Corn; and the duty of the Catechised, towards him that Catechiseth; yet so that those Labourers have no Action by rigour of Law, nor any Chancery to relieve them.

It was a notable Constitution of the wise and Potent Prince

Caro

*Carolus M. constituit. fol. 73. Ut decime Populi dividantur in quatuor partes, id est, una pars Episcopo, alia Clericis, tertia pauperibus, quarta Ecclesie in fabricis applicetur, ut in Decretis Gelasii P. continetur.*

That the Peoples Tythes should be divided into four Parts, one whereof should maintain the Bishops, a second the Clergy-men, a third should maintain the Poor, and a fourth should go to the repair of Churches. Now if the Church-wardens and Overseers of the Poor should have all their Levies raised out of their Tythes, which was the first and best use of them, what a peal of sacriledge should we have ringing about our ears continually ! Let me soberly propound a few Queries.

1. *Qu.* Whether they who are for a moderation in Reformation, a mediocrity in coming up to the Primitive purity, ought not to be as real for a moderation and a mediocrity in maintenance ? It seems to be very disproportionable, to cry out for a mean in Trading, a moderation in Preaching, moderation in Reforming, and yet to be immoderate for Revenues. A little I see will serve of any thing but Riches. Let men have enough of Wages, and they can be content with little enough of work.

2. Whether it be rational to proceed in this matter *ascendendo*, to bring up the lean Vicarages to the corpulency of fat Parsonages. or *descendendo*, to reduce the *gouty Benefices* to the modicum of the *meagre Vicarages*, and not rather to make an equality, that they may both meet in the half way ?

3. When a Marker Town or Corporation is low, and not able to maintain its poor, the Law inables the Justices of the Peace to bring the Neighbouring Villages under contribution; and they who understand what Charity is in a mean estate, are glad since there is so sad occasion to demonstrate their charity to lay hold on it : Let it therefore be enquired, why the poor Corporation-Vicars ought not to be augmented out of the richer Parsonages of the Neighbourhood ? but many will cut a large Thong out of anothers Hide, who will be sure to spare his own Skin; and they whose tails sweep the ground, will not lend an Inch to him, that is docked close by the Buttocks.

4. Whether the poor Vicar ought not rather to be relieved out of the rich Clergy-mans Excrements, than out of the Life-blood of the Laity ? if the Revenues of Pluralists, and Prebends with other such useless Creatures, were annexed to the ill-provided places, all would be well : but the Daughters of the Horseleach

cry

very still, *Give, give*, and yet they are ready to burst with blood.

5. Whether it be not more agreeable to the Primitive times, and the nature of the Christian Religion, that the Clergy should have some dependance on the people as to Temporals, who depend so much on their Clergy in Spirituals? we consider the Inconveniencies of a depending Clergy, but not the greater ones of having them absolute and independent; who having got a settled Maintenance, despise their Benefactors, contemn those that drudge to maintain their splendid Equipage, and torment their Consciences, who keep the wolf from their doors: The middle way is therefore best, that so much be settled as is absolutely necessary, and leave them to stand upon their *good behaviour* for superfluities: since he that is rich, and able to contribute liberally this year, may become poor, and need Contribution the next; and it's not equal to be compelled to Charity, when he cannot discharge his Debts.

6. Whether it be not a most scandalous reflection upon the English Clergy, which he intimates p. 39. *That the motives and invitations of the most judicious Clergy, to undertake the work (viz. the charge of the flock) is from the most liberal maintenance?*

7. Whether the healing of the Clergies poverty, will not cure them of their Laboriousness in Preaching? and whether doubling the Revenues will not single the Sermons? I have read of a poor Vicar, that being taken notice of by the Bishop for an industrious Preacher, to encourage him in his work, he gave him a good bulkie Parsonage; but observing that he began presently to slacken his pace, and come to *once a day*, he sends for him, expostulates the Case with him, why he should *work less* now he had *more wages*? to whom he answered ingeniously, *Parvæ loquuntur Cura, ingentes stupent.*

8. Whether it was advisedly spoken by our Enquirer, to compare a Ministers condescension to his scrupulous people in the matter of Ceremonies, to Esau's selling his Birthright for a Mess of Pottage? for if the Minister should happen to cut short his Common Service to gratifie his Patron in hopes of a Dinner, the worst he can make of it is, that he sells a Mess of Pottage for a Sundays Pudding. And if a Ministers Birth-right consist in Rites and Ceremonies, he that gives a Mess of Pottage for it, will certainly buy it too dear.

3. The third cause is the late Wars: And for proof hereof he will desire the reader to look no further back, than the late Wars between this Kingdom, and the States of the Low Countries. But why



no further back? we used to be led back as far as the late Civil-Wars; but our Enquirer was better advised than his Reader perhaps is aware of: It had not been safe to follow truth too near the Heels, lest it should have dasht out his Teeth.

But into what a perplexed Dilemma has he brought the Church of England? If we have peace with Holland, and therewith Trade and Commerce, then comes in all the new-fangled commodities, Ceremonies and Rites of *forreign growth*, exorick *Customes*, Jack-in-a-boxes; If we have War with them, then the Reins of Government are remiss, and Nonconformity grows apace: for that (says he) the contempt of Religion is greater, and the state of the Church worse at the end, than the beginning of those Wars: Could but we understand the mystery that lurks under that word Religion, and that *Jargon* and *Cypher* [the state of the Church] we might easily return an answer. By Religion then understand Ceremony; by the state of the Church understand its power to crush and ruin all that comply not with those Ceremonies; and then it's very true, that Wars are a great enemy to Religion: Every thing is so far to be repured evil as it crosses, and so far good as it advances the Trade of Ceremonies and Impositions. If Navigation and Marchandise be Essential to the flourishing state of the Nation, yet if they stand in the way of Ceremonies, dam them as *Schismatical*; and Wars and Blood-shed, and the beggering of the Nation, if they would but promote Ceremonies, were amongst the choicest desirables: However the remedy is cheap and easie; 'Tis but parting with the Flag, the Sovereignty of the Sea, (which our enemies would have perswaded us were but a Ceremony) the Fishery, the East India Trade, and perhaps two or three more such *inconsiderable necessaries*, and we might have secured our Innocent Ceremonies, and the Church-men swaggered over the Consciences of Dissenters.

He that has a mind to interpose in a discourse of Wars, may possibly get a broken Pate for his pains; otherwise the valour of the English Nation, has so justified it selfe in our Naval Engagements, that it needs not be ashamed to look back upon its behaviour; but I shall only observe as I pass along these few things.

1. That the Ecclesiastical Histories observe to our hand that the Wars between the Emperour and the Persians, proved a means to check those persecutions which the Arians raised against the Orthodox: and if the great Governour of the World will over-rule publick Calamities, to render the condition of persecuted Christi-

ans tolerable, we have the more reason to admire his powerful wildom, who out of *so great an Evil* could extract *so great a Good*.

2. I must call to mind one of our *Enquirers* grave sentences; *ubi solitudinem fecerunt; pacem vocant*: That which some men count Peace is nothing but *havock and desolation*. Like some great *Enclosers*, who having depopulated all about them, and left nothing but the bare Ribs, and naked Skeleton, of sometimes flourishing Farms, bless themselves that they are at peace from the noise of the obstreperous Carters. Thus when our Ecclesiastical Projectors, shall have ruined Trade, routed the Conscientious, and forced peaceable Dissenters into deserts; beggèred Corporations, those Nests of Schism, they may applaud themselves for profound States-men, that they have wrought out their own ease, with the miseries of the People.

3. Wars may reasonably contribute something to a just and well bounded Liberty of Conscience; for how could a Prince expect his Subjects should hazard their lives in his righteous cause and quarrel, and open their Purfes wide to maintain the War, when either they must lose them in his Service, or if they return, having survived apparent dangers, be trampled upon at home, by those who have all the while sat still at ease, wrapt up in warm Fur and security? There's no great difference, *whether a man be killed by chain-shot or a single bullet*; And yet a generous Spirit would accept it as more Eligible to meet a noble death in the field, fighting for his Prince and Country, than to languish and pine away an inglorious Life in servitude, under Ecclesiastical Impositions.

4. If the effects of War were lamented, as letting in Debauchery and prophaness, tolerating immoralities, antiquating the practice of Religion, we should *mourne with him that thus mourns*: But when we shall have an Oration of the Evils of the War, and at last the great one is, that it makes people not so fond of Ceremonies, whereas Peace and Prosperity multiplies them, it's enough to make a people entertain thoughts less evil of the one, and less honourable of the other: for thus *the Spartans made the lives of the People so intolerable in Peace*, that they might more readily engage in Wars abroad. And indeed such misrepresentations of the reason of things, have made the World desire, like the Salamander, War for its Element, that they might not dwell in the hotter fire of Persecution in a more moderate Climate, called Peace; for a Person of Honour that in defence of his Country has come up to the

*indut*

mouth of a Cannon, and come off with renown, to be slain by an Ecclesiastical Canon, would make him resent his fall with regret, and dying, bite the ground.

4. The fourth, and indeed the greatest cause of all these mischiefs, is a pestilent evil, known by the name of Trade: This Kingdom of great Britain is an Island, which as by its situation it has the greatest need of, so the greatest advantage by Commerce. That which Nature made a Necessity, Art and Industry have turn'd into a Virtue: That, as we cannot live comfortably without it, so we are capacitated to live Gloriously by it: To speak of its usefulness to English men, were to be as impertinently absurd, as that Soldier who would needs *De re Militari coram Hanibale differere*, read a Lecture of Tactics, to one of the bravest Captains of his time for Courage and Conduct, and he may seem almost as vain that should commend it, as he would be impious that should disparage it.

Before Trade be irreversibly doomed for an intolerable evil, may we ask with Pilate, pray what evil has it done? has it introduced the sins of the torrid Zone? or made those wickednesses Denizens, that were peculiar to hotter Climates? has it impoverished the Subject, or lessen'd the Revenues of the Crown? no! nothing of all these; but it has feloniously, and of its malice forethought, brought down the price of Ceremonies, which are the staple commodities of the Kingdom: But did not the dear Ceremonies come over by Shipping too? they are not drugs of our own growth, and therefore in Civility, we are obliged to carry a decent respect towards Navigation, that brought us home so rich a Cargo: But consider, Shipping was useful till it had landed this freight, and then like *Julius Caesar*, burn them all, that they may never export so precious a Commodity.

In drawing up a charge against this Trade, our Enquirer looks like the very Picture of Modesty: He seems to say, *O utinam noscirem Literas!* He could almost wish (had it not been too great an injury to the World) that he had not been so Eloquent: if he might do it without offence, he would take the boldness to say; that is, if the Merchants would not be angry to have an Embargo laid upon their Ships, and their Goods seized, He would say something.--Nay pray Sir, speak out; the Merchants will exercise so much self-denial sure for once, as to be beggered. Why then this is the something he would say, That the vast increase of Trade

does usually reflect some inconveniences upon Ecclesiastical Affairs : The most favourable Indictment surely that ever was drawn up against an evil of so pernicious consequence, in all the world.

1. They are but *inconveniencies* ; and what commodity is there but is attended by some small *inconveniencies* ?
2. They are but *some inconveniencies* neither, as perhaps, that one of the wealthy ungovernable Fanaticks cannot be called to account in the Ecclesiastical Courts, because he is *extra quatuor Maria*, or so.
3. It's not *always* neither, though *usually*, that these fatal effects follow it ; for sometimes an Eclipse, or Quartile Aspect may be disappointed of its malignant influence, by the interposition of a more benign Planet.
4. Nor has Trade a direct spleen against the Church: it does but reflect its malevolent Beams ; Now ye know that *Radii reflexus* languet.
5. Nor is Trade *quā* Trade, in it self considered, but the *increase* and the *vast increase* of Trade that has all the guilt upon it ; so that if we could persuade Merchants and Tradersmen either not to Trade, or not to thrive of their Trades, it would prevent all this mischief ; and I durst undertake to persuade one half of them at least to this latter, if that would reconcile them to him.
6. And these inconveniencies are but to Ecclesiastical Affairs. Religion will not be prejudiced, nor Holiness suffer, I hope ; but there are *some Affairs*, what ever they are, that some Ecclesiasticks are abrewing, will not work so well : In one word, it's all but Ceremonies.

The most Christian King is all this while endeavouring to settle Factories and Plantations for Trade abroad, and to give it all possible encouragement at home And indeed they say, he has a very wise Council about him ; who verifie the old Proverb, That the French are wiser than they seem ; and they tell him, that whatever Quarter he carries with these Church-men, who have ever private designs of their own distinct from the general interest of that monarchy ; yet Navigation and Trade must be encouraged, and let the Priests fume and fret, or whine, and put the finger in the eye, all's one, he will settle commerce for all the idle chat of Kirk-staefmen : But to speak truth, I do not hear that the Clergy there, whether Regular or Secular, have these dreadful apprehensions, That the Rise of Trade will be the Fall of the Church ; and perhaps the Reasons of things, may differ : They have Legions of Ceremonies: and may well spare some rattered Companies ; their Commons are stock'd sans Number ; and if they

they were a little *stinted*, the rest would thrive the better; but should we lose a *Brace*, or a *Lead*, we were half undone: and yet I am confident that Wife and Valiant Prince would sell us a dozen of the best Ceremonies he has in his Empire, for one half of our Trade, and thank us into the bargain.

We should smile at the tenderness of the Gentleman that would throw himself, and hopes away, to satisfy the impotent longing of a Green-sickness Girl; and others would as much smile at us, should we sacrifice the Wealth and Strength of a Nation to the humour of those, who for a few Ceremonies, which apprized by indifferent persons, are not worth one of our Planrations, would loose both: But if the Trade of a Nation be of no more concernment than to be cast away for such trifles, all we shall gain by the hand, is an *Additional Reason* why they are called *Beggarly Rudiments*.

You are therefore satisfied that it was mannerly done to scrape a Leg to the Merchants before he would propound so harsh and displeasing a business: He would do it *without offense*, if he might be so bold! He envies no mans wealth, Its far from his thoughts to wish the Tide of Trade dammed up: offended! I wonder who could find in his heart to be offended at such civility! such potent charms of Rhetorick are able to perswade them to Moor up their Ships for ever, rather than import any of those *Holland* prohibited Commodities.

Readers, you are now to give your Attendance to a most eloquent Oration, which is the Embalming of Trade; before it be converted to Mummy: for thus the Orator:

*Trade is hugely advantageous to the publick, as well as private persons, in many respects: It much raises the parts, and sharpens the Wits of a Nation by foreign Conversations; it opens a passage to the discovery of other Countries, and of the works of God and Man, of Art and Nature; it's the great Incentive, and Instrument of humane Society: It makes all mankind of one Body, and by mutual intercourse to serve the occasions, supply the needs, and minister to the delight and entertainment one of another. It enlarges the mind of men, as well as their fortunes; insomuch that any Nation is unpollite, unbred, and half barbarous, without it; It inures men to hardship and danger, and instructs them in subtilty, and all the arts of living and self-security; it adds much to the Beauty, power and strength of a Nation, and to the Riches and Revenues of the Prince---* Dixi!

*And yet all this notwithstanding -- Ay ! theres one evil in't which we little dream of, which out-weighs all those Conveniencies : Enlargement of Trade hath usually been attended (he must crave leave to say it) with as much latitude of Conscience, (then some mens Consciences have above Seventy degrees of South and North Latitude.) And the heat of that, with as much coldness and indifferency in Religion. It is commonly observed to introduce great diversity of Opinions, and consequently to abate of mens Zeal for, and reverence of an uniformity in what was before established. And therefore better the publick were undone, Mens Parts and Wits made as dull as a Beetle, foreign discoveries left to the pragmatistical Dutch, all Commerce with other Worlds interrupted, and the Britains once again excommunicated from the rest of Mankind : Better a thousand times Mens Fortunes and Hearts were broken, the Glory of the Nation stained, its strength shattered, the Exchequer exhausted, than Uniformity in some little things endangered, one Ceremony disparaged, the wills of some Clergy-men crossed, which might shorten their days, or one pair of Organs put out of Tune, which would make them grumble like a pair of Scotch Bag-pipes.*

And to speak the truth, all the great ends of Trade might be secured by Ceremonies, and an exact uniformity in them ; for it will wonderfully sharpen Mens wits, and make them both as keen and blew as a Razor, to find out every day some happy new conceit : Pope Vitalian was the man that glories first to have taught mankind the Art of worshipping God with a box of Whistles. Society will be maintained by being all of a piece at home ; and instead of Foreign discoveries, an Inquisition will better search out the Terra incognita of Conscience, and let this Enquirer be one of the Lords Inquisitors of that Holy House ; and the strength of the Nation would be better secured, if the train'd Bands were untaught all their old Postures, to the right and the left, and knew nothing but face about to the East. The Beauty of the Nation will be so enhanced, that we shall shine with a painted face of Religion : and the old controversie between *Mare Liberum*, and *Mare Clausum*, will be for ever determined, and that on the right side : which out of Zeal to the Honour of the incomparable Grotius, every devout person is bound to pray for ; nor shall the Seas any more be proud of their blood, which have fought to assert their Right to that rolling Empire.

It was then seasonably, and well thought on, to propound to

us the wisdom of the Lacedemonians, who that the Laws and Govern-  
ment might not be disturbed with Novelty, absolutely forbid Trade &  
Traffick, or so much as Travelling into other Countries, lest the Citi-  
zens should barter away their own Laws and Customs, for those of other  
Cities. But then I doubt their Laws were about the great things:  
that concerned the Nations being. They did not make Laws,  
That every mans hair should be of a length, and then swear the people  
to observe them, and forbid Trade, lest they should bring in the  
Geneva Cut, and destroy Periwigs: And besides all this, they pro-  
hibited Travell as well as Trade; as good leave all the doors of a  
House open, as one: and stop never a leak, as not all, for one will  
sink the Vessel. Now how to restrain Travel, deserves more  
consideration; and therefore let it be remembred, that Trade and  
Travel are no otherwise evil, than in their mischievous consequences;  
and could we separate the grand inconveniences from them, they  
would not be mortal; seeing then we Trade more into Holland,  
and Travel more into Italy, simple Travel cannot be so destru-  
ctive as compounded Trade.

These Arguments Cook'd up in good Language, may perswade  
all Men to step out of the way, and throw themselves over the  
Bridge in convenient season; for what can be impossible to these  
Arts? But he had told us, p. 35. That there are oftentimes Reasons  
that make one form necessary in one place and to one people, and not  
another. And therefore his Reasonings from Sparta will hardly go  
current in England: Some say Sparta was a free State, and there-  
fore it may not hold in a Monarchy; and others say, these were  
the fundamental Laws of their Magna Charta, which they would  
secure by abridging Trade and Travel: and not some odd Arti-  
culi Cleri, what Garments their Priests should wear on Holy-days.

But never was Man in such a distraction between his remain-  
ing pity to the distressed Merchants; and his yearning Bowels to  
the precious Ceremonies; so has the Merchant himself been dis-  
tracted in an Aporetick Debate between his Lading, and his  
Life, till at last dear Life overcame the sickle of combating-Ob-  
jections, and ever board went all his Merchant-life: Thus this  
Compassionate Person would not have Trade die, but yet he must  
have Impositions live: and where are those grave Head-pieces  
that can reconcile these differing Interests? Why, yet he hopes  
that the English Reformation is such, that it may rather gain than  
lose Profelytes, by being confronted with any other Institutions: And



there is no question but under its present Advantages it would do so, did not the severity of Impositions, and rigorous exacting of things, which *at best are but indifferent, at most, doubtful, and to many, sinful, against which standing Caveats have been entered from the Beginning of the Reformation, a little murr the sweet air of her truly beauteous face, and thereby render her not altogether so surprizing.*

But as the Case stands, from whence should we hope for this numerous Offspring of Profelytes? from amongst the Papists? Alas, they have conceived greater hopes of us, *That their Tyber shall swallow up our Thames, before our London shall Profelyte their Babylon:* And they are encouraged in their hopes, because they say our Ceremonies are a Bridge over the Narrow Seas, not to let all the *Women of Europe into England, as we saucy;* but to admit *Rome* amongst us with all its Retinue of Pompous nothings. From the reformed Churches then? Alas they are satisfied in their Primitive simplicity, they content themselves that *their Churches are True Churches, their Ministers Gospel Ministers;* and though they may perhaps make a Journey now and then to learn *English Preaching,* they think it not worth the while to fetch Fire. The Expedients propounded to reconcile Trade and Uniformity, are as follow.

1. That *there may be such Laws provided, and such care taken that the one (I suppose he means Trade) be not discouraged, nor the other (Discipline no doubt) corrupted.* I have been studying what further Acts of Uniformity this Gentleman would have enacted, whether with the grave Recorder he would introduce the *Spanish Inquisition,* or revive the *Act for Banishment,* or extend the Statute of *Præmunire* to every one that shall keek at a Ceremony: I hope God will pour out the *Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of Council and the fear of the Lord* upon our Legislators: we may make *Rols* to whip our selves upon our *Childrens backs:* and the Teeth of Posterity may be set on edge with those sower Grapes, which though the Fathers did not eat, yet they Planted the *Vines* that bore them. But what would he have? Why *he would have a more simple way of Agriculture attended to, as it was amongst the Spartans, and this Nation formerly:* Really if it had not been for these *Spartans.* I cannot tell what we should have done: But its always thus when Divines will be Statesmen, and dictating to their Superiors: Scholars sit up late at their Studies, till the Cock  
and

and their brains begin to Crow : and what then uncouth whimsies, breed in their heads ? there was once amongst us an odd Generation of Folk, we call'd 'em *Adamites*, and they would level all things, reduce all things to the mode of *Paradise* ; such another *Capriccio* is our Enquirer, who though he will not reduce Religious affairs as high as the Apostle, yet Trade must be carried higher, and new modeled *Secundum usum Spartæ*. I am a thinking what we should do with our Wool, which was once the staple-commodity of the Nation till the Ceremonies carried it : when we have spun it, woven it, and worn as much as we need, what must we do with the rest ? I should never have guessed, but that there's an old stuff set off with a new Name, they call it *E-piscopacy revived*, and that must employ the remainder.

I have heard of a supercilious *Spanish Don*, who being asked by his Friend, *How the English men lived* ? Answered, *Oh they live by selling Ale to one another*. The Answer was unpardonably scandalous, yet agreeable to the *Mores* Humour of that people : But to this very pass must we come, when the design against Trade takes, to Barter Food for Raiment ; and both for Ceremonies

2. His next expedient is ; *That every one have so much Charity towards the Governours of his own Countrey, and this Church, as to think them both as wise and honest as in other places*. And let me add : *A great deal honestier and wiser too*. We hope our Governours are so wise, and tender of their Subjects, as to allow them their Consciences, the only thing God has reserved to himself ; and that they are ambitious to preserve intire for him ; which will sweeten all that cost and pains they are at in the service of him, whom *Divine Grace* has set over them : But the highest opinion we can possibly entertain of the Wisdom and Sincere Piety of our Governours, may well consist with an Humble Petition, to be excused in that one thing, the Immediate Worship of God.

As it does not imply that I am wiser or better than every man whose Religion I cannot own in every particular ; so neither does it suppose that I entertain low thoughts of the Legislators wisdom, because I cannot subscribe to his Tendries, whilst I patiently submit to his penalties ; for it must needs be supposed that I judge him vested with Authority from God to Govern me, and wise in annexing a sanction to his Law so equal, that I submit to it, whose preceptive part I cannot discern so to be.

I have heard some plead in justification of the Severities in-

sifted on the Jesuits in Q. Elizabeth and K. James his Beign that they suffered not for Religion, but disturbing the Govern-  
ment, we humbly beg the same favour; Let not our Worship be  
accounted a Breach of the Peace, *ipso facto*, but if the matter be  
disloyal, or the Consequences turbulent and tumultuous, we have  
no farther to plead in our own behalf.

3. A third expedient is, *That we impute not all the distractions of mens minds, and the quarrels against the Church, to the badness of its Constitution, since this point of Trade hath such an influence, as we see both in the nature of the thing, and in the effects of it.* I have no power to compound for the Trading part, and presume he has as little to treat on the behalf of the other part. The blame of our Distractions, Divisions and Quarrels, will lie where they ought, let him or I lay them where we please; If Trade brings in multitudes of Opinions, yet that those Opinions make quarrels, is because perhaps one needless Opinion is made Cock of the Dug-bill, and Crows over all the rest its equals, and may be its betters. I think impartially, there's blame on all hands; and if we could wave that sorry way of excusing our selves, by accusing others, we were certainly in a fair way of Healing: yet one point he has left unproved to the Charity of the well-disposed Reader, viz. *That Trade in its own Nature has such an influence upon our Distractions*

4. His last remote Cause is from the Papists and Atheists, who both, though upon several grounds, combine their malice against the Church.

I. And first for the Papists, concerning whom, he will treat of two things: first, why they are such enemies to our Church; and then wherein the Enmity discovers it self.

§. 1. What is the reason that these Papists should be such implacable enemies to this Church? Did we ever go about to blow up the Pope and his Consistory with Gun powder? Or ever Massacre a Hundred Thousand of his Catholicks in Ireland? Oh no! It was a higher, or a deeper cause, no matter which, whilst our Enquirers penetrating Head can reach it.

1. The decent order of our Church shames their Pageantry: Rome has a Brazen-face of her own; and I assure this Gentleman for all his confidence, it's not a little matter will fetch the blood into her Cheeks. She has cause enough to blush, but she wants a Fore-head, though the blood of Thousands of Protestants lies upon her  
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Conscience, yet it appears not in her looks : But before our *Enquirer* upbraid them with their *Pageantry*, it will be necessary that he gives us the Nice critical difference between *Ceremonies*, *Decency*, and *Pageantry*; for if the definitions of both be not fixed to a hairs breadth, either the Papists will prove their *Theatrical Pomp* to be *Decency*, or our *Ceremonies* to be *Pageantry*; If all *mystical Rites* be *Decent*, they will shew us *Twenty for One*; and will hardly be made to blush for their penury, or to envy our greater plenty: But if they should be found a piece of *Pageantry*, they have infinitely out-done us: but withall, it's no great commendation to have but little *Pageantry* in Gods service.

2. *The Dignity of the Church shames theirs*: *Dignity* is a Term of Art, and capable of several meanings: If by *Dignity* we should (as we ought) to understand, *A real essential worthiness*, arising from something excellent in the account of God; then this Church has so out stript her, that she ought not to be named in the same day and year. But if we speak with the Vulgar, and take this *Dignity* for some external glory shining out in secular Lustre, which is that current signification, which Custom the Master of the mint, has stamp't upon it, I doubt she will hold up her Head, and not be dash't out of Countenance; she can produce her *purpuratos patres*, her Cardinals, (Princes fellows) her Dignitaries: she can produce you her Acolytes, dancing attendance upon her Deacons; her Deacons footing it after her Priests, her inferior Clergy bowing before her mitred Prelates; and all these orderly Reverencing their Metropolitan: but then she boasts unmeasurably, that she has an Ecclesiastical Head to be the Center of Union to all those; so that whether you run up the scale from the poor *Ostiary* to the *Exorcist*, and so upwards, or down the scale from the supream infallible Nodile, moving all the inferior Wyers, she will brazen it out, and never hang down her Head.

3. *The Ancient Gravity of our Church reproves theirs*: I am sorry for the Honour of our Church, which I truly Reverence, that this Gentleman in vying with Rome, should pitch upon those particulars, wherein if we do excel, and carry the day, it will be no such Victory as to challenge a *Triumph*; and yet such is the dubiousness of the case, that perhaps we may lose the day: I do not yet hear that Rome has disclaimed Antiquity to be one of the marks of the true Church: and know something of her presumption in applying it to her self: Let any Antiquity short of Scripture  
Epocha

Epocha, be fixt upon, and she will make a sorry shift to scramble through many a tiresome Century, and scuffle to come as near the Apostolical days as some others: Both sides I think have play'd at the game of *Drop-father*, so long till they are weary, and forced to confess, that somethings *now in usage, were unknown to the Fathers*, and many things practiced by the Fathers, which we have silently suffered to grow obsolete by desuetude.

I look upon these things as matters of course and form, to look big, and set the best foot before: for if ever we confute *Rome* with an *Army of hard words, Decency, Order, Antiquity, Gravity*, they must be such as the word of God has made so. It must be a *Decency* warranted by God himself either from the *light of nature*, or *Scripture*; an *Order* of Christs Establishment; a *Gravity* exemplified from the Apostles; and an *Antiquity* which was from the beginning; and when *Scripture* is once made sole Umpire in the Quarrel; as the Church of England will certainly run the Papist out of all distance, so the Nonconformist will begin to put in his stake, and perhaps win the Plate.

S. 2. If you ask how the Church of *Rome* undermines our Church, he answers.

1. *She furnishes other parties with Arguments against it.* It were much easier to evince, that the Enquirer has rather borrowed his Arguments from *Rome*, than *Rome* lent one to the Nonconformists: I think there's not one Arrow he can shoot against them, but I can shew him where it was borrowed, or shotten from a Jesuits Quiver: where was the Argument taken from Axes, Halters, Pillories, Gallies, Prisons, Confiscations, as some express it, or as he more concisely, *Executing the Laws*, borrow'd, but from *Rome*? The Scripture knows it not, the better sort of Heathens abhor'd it, Protestants disown it, Papists only glory in it,

*Ut re jure tuo Cæsar, sectamque Lutheri,  
Ense, Rotâ, Ponto, Funibus, Igne Necæ.*

And whence was that argument for Active unlimited Obedience to all things commanded by the Church, borrowed? for though it becomes no mouth so well as his that can boast of *Infallibility*, yet still we are pressed with the same Argument, and in the last resort *Publick Conscience* must carry it. I am sorry this imprudent person should give any one occasion to say further, that

that some of us at home have furnisht *Rome* with Arguments against the Reformation, Arguments from the Scripture, *Rome* has none; from the nature of the thing, not one; but some have put into their Hands a left handed Dagger, which does mischief enough, it's called *Argumentum ad Hominem*. Thus when we are earnest with them to throw away their Oil and Cream; they bid us, throw away our Cross; If we desire her to reform her Cowles and Copes, she calls to us to reform our Surplice. When we in a friendly way caution them not to feed upon the Devils flesh, they answer, As good eat his flesh as the Broth he was boiled in.

2. She is all for blind Obedience at home; but preaches up tenderness of Conscience abroad. And what the difference is between blind Obedience, and Obedience meerly on the account of the Command, I would willingly learn: and if any can shew us a better reason for the things commanded and enjoyned than that, we shall return him thanks.

If I might now borrow the Enquirers place so long as, whilst I propound a few Enquiries, I would immediatly resign to him his Province.

§. 1. If the enmity between the two Churches be so great as is pretended, what was the reason that so many Stars of the first magnitude in this Orb, were in Conjunction with the Dragons Tail? Why were they so ready to yeild him his Western Patriarchate, and all within the first four hundred years? Which will at once bring England under his Subjection: though I much question whether the Grand Signior will have so much good nature as to resign him the Eastern Patriarchate so easily.

§. 2. If the Church of Rome be this Churches Enemy, is she not then concerned to get more Churches to be her Friends? It's a wild Humour of some Church-men, that they will disoblige all the world, provoking every ones hand against themselves, whilst their hand is against every one; If Rome be an Enemy, she is a parent, malicious, subtil, and United Enemy, and it concerns a Church not to be divided at home, when her Enemies are United abroad: and to Combine with the foreign Protestants in Love; were an excellent way to prevent the Combinations of Romes hatred.

§. 3. It would be enquired, if Rome be such an Enemy, what should be that which provokes her wrath and indignation? What that should be that makes the envious Snakes, wherewith Antichrists

Antichrists head is Periwigg'd, to hiss and spit out their Venom? Does she storm and rage because we have retained two or three of her fine Ceremonies? That cannot be the Origin of her spight! They are *those things* wh rein the Church of *England*, and Nonconformists are mutually agreed, that *Rome* opposes this Church in; and they are *those things* wherein this Church Symbolizes with *Rome*, wherein she differs most from the Nonconformists.

When the Heathens triumphed in the great fears of their *Maximus Tyrius*, and *Apo'lonius Tyanicus*, the Christians answered; That whatever good effect their Religion ever had upon the Lives of Men, was owing to those Principles and Truths, which it had *in Common* with Christianity. Thus will Dissenters plead: That whatever success this Church has had in its Ministry upon the Souls of Men, is due to those fundamental Truths and Doctrines of the Christian Faith, which she obtains *in Common* with the Reformed Churches: On the other side; The *Roman* Faction persecutes and undermines this Church upon grounds equal to all the Reformed Churches; and this Church is angry (at least) with Dissenters for those matters wherein she seems to approach too near *Roman* corruption.

2. We come now to the *Atheists*; A Generation so abominable, of whom we may yet say as was said of the *Astrologers* in old *Rome*, *Hoc genus hominum semper vetabitur, & semper in urbe nostra retinebitur*; A people always banished, yet never departed from the City: such a Tribe are these *Atheists*. Every one has a hard word for them, yet many entertain them: you shall not meet with a Man in a Thousand, but will liberally rail at damned *Macchiavillian* policy, which yet according to the proportion of their little wit, they strive to imitate: wick tempts me to think, that they hate not so much his *Knavery*, as they repine at their own *folly*; and judge nor his politricks so evil; s they are vext that they cannot equalize him; That they Nibble at his principles, because they cannot reach his wit.

It is but a slender evidence that another is *in the right*, because *Atheists* are so grossly wrong; And yet to declaim against *Atheism*, has these considerable advantages: First, some think they may be securely *Atheistical* themselves, if they can but flourish with a few ingenious Sentences against them: and a witty Libel against such, is a sufficient Purgation for him that has a Talent to expose the



the rest of Religion. Secondly, it's a plausible Argument, that that Religion must needs be excellent, that has the worst of Men for its Enemies, and they must certainly be adjudged worthy persons who are so Zealous against such Impiety; what Man of Charity would suspect *Irreligion* to wear the Cloak of *servency against Atheism*? And yet it's comon to hear it hotly prosecuted in the Pulpit, by some who come warm from that Service to the practice of it. I dare refer it to the judgment of the impartial world, whether he be not a kin to a *practical one*, who disputes for a God, and then tears Men in pieces for worshipping him according to the best Light they can get from Scripture and Nature? And in such a manner, as wherewith they can find no fault, but that 'tis not their own? and possibly was their own too not many years since, and probably had been so still, had they not been purchased into a better?

There are three Questions here to be resolved. What Atheism is? Whence it comes? And wherein does it oppose the Church, and contribute to a separation from it.

1. *What Atheism is, and who is the Atheist?* And this is as needfull an enquiry, as any of those needless ones, wherewith he tormented us in the last Chapter: I assure the Reader, it is a word of a Volatile Nature, and Versatile signification, as any that gives us trouble with its double meaning. In Germany an Atheist once signified a Person that meddled with the Popes Miter, or the Monks fat Bellies: Epicurus of old some think was branded with Atheism, because he could not swallow Polytheism: At home some conclude he must be an Atheist that scruples the *Jus Divinum of Tyths*: and if he shall detain a Tyth Pig, he is a *Sacrilegious Atheist* to boot: Formerly it border'd upon Atheism to have denied the Divine Right of Episcopacy; but I see that one may Question that now, and yet be a Christian: What then an Atheist is, I shall leave to the Industry of this Enquirer.

2. But from whence this Atheism should proceed, is a Question that has been so fully Answered by a Learned and Honourable Pen of late, I shall not need to repeat any thing: Yet this is obvious, That when Preachers Preach against Preaching, their Auditors may easily stumble into a belief, that what they Preach is not much material to be believed, when they had rather it should not be preached at all, than not under their Formalities: If ever I should hear a Tradesman bitterly inveigh against Trading; that  
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it never was a good World since there was so much *Trading*; that we never had peace since we had *Markets twice a week*; that there can be no peace or settlement expected, so long as Men may lay out their Money, and buy their Goods *where they pleased*: let such a one be dealt with as severely as the Enemies of Trade can wish, I shall not plead his cause: To this if we shall add, that when the World takes notice, that they who are called *the men of God*, and are therefore supposed to *know most of him*, to be *most like him*, and to represent him *in their lives* as a Holy, Merciful, Tender, and Gracious God, as they present him *in their Doctrine*, shall yet with unwearied fury prosecute Men to Poverty, Prison and Grave, meerly for non-compliance in those things which themselves have invented: they give great occasion to Atheistical inclinations to say in their Hearts, As good believe no God, as one so cruel and unmerciful, as his own Servants represent him to us.

3. But the last is the most important Question: *How, or where, in does Atheism undermine the Church? Or contribute to separation from it?* That Atheism does oppose all Religion as such, was never doubted, in that it takes away the great Principle presupposed to all Religion, *That there is a God*; but how it does particularly oppose the Church of England, so far as she differs from others, is I conceive the present Question. It is somewhat difficult to imagine, that they who have put off Humanity, should scruple to put on any garb of obtaining Conformity. They who have renounced *one God*, will easily own a thousand Ceremonies; what were it to them if all the Numerous Rites of Rome were introduced, could they but get the sence of a Diety obliterated out of their Consciences, that they might sin without the stings and twinges of an approaching Judgment, which is the perfection they aim at? Their Heaven has no God in it, their Hell no Devil in it; It must be a strange Impression which an Atheistical Throat cannot swallow; he that is of no Religion (as I said) can subscribe to any Religion, to which those Principles are very cognate, which are contrived to avoid persecution under all Forms and Constitutions: How therefore they should be such grand Enemies to Conformity, I wait to be resolved. 1. *The Atheists* (says he) *will not set their wit against a Fanatick, they must have higher Game*: by this Argument our Enquirer has demonstrated himself to be no Atheist; yet I would not have him trust much to it, I suppose

too, they have found higher Game than Ceremonies; when they open their black mouths against God himself. 2. *They inflame the Causes of Divisions, provoke Mens Passions, and exasperate Mens minds one against another.* He has spoken more truth than perhaps he is aware of in these few words: I have ever suspected, and now have warrant to utter my suspicions: that it is a spice of Atheism that exasperates Men against those who quietly and peaceably worship God blessed for ever. 3. *They scurrilously traduce all that's serious; and what they cannot do by Manly discourse, they endeavour by Buffoonry:* Thus these blind Beetles that rose out of filth and excrement Buz about the world. And now I am sure where to find the whole Club of Atheists: Amongst those Church-men who blaspheme the Office of the Divine Spirit as a Noise and Buz: Amongst those who openly scoff at the Beauty, Loveliness, and Preciousness of a Redeemer: Amongst them who have no better way to confute the satisfactoriness of Christs death, than to make God like an angry Man when his passion's over, and has glutted himself with revenge: amongst them who can no otherwise describe the Zeal of Christ for his Fathers House, than by the furies of a Jewish Zealot.

He has now dispatched the remote Causes of separation; and if the Reader complains, that amongst all these Causes he hears not a Syllable of that grand Cause of all Divisions, the needless imposing of things doubtful or sinfull, as the Terms of Union and Communion with the Church: Let him have a little patience, he may find it in its proper place, viz. amongst the nearer, immediate, direct, and proper Causes of separation, whither we now follow our Enquirer.

### CHAP. III.

Where the more immediate Causes of Distractions, viz. Rashness of Popular Judgment, Judaism, Prejudice, want of true Zeal, are considered and the Enquirer manifested to have been something ridiculous.

Hitherto our Author has acted with good Applause the part of a Compassionate Enquirer; he will now alter his Properties, and play the other part of the Passionate Enquirer. He has worn  
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the Person of a Friend long enough; and will now put on the severer Habit of a Judge, and then he is resolved *some body or other shall smart for it*, though that belongs properly to the Lictor's or Beadle's Office.

There is only one small matter which he would *hespeak*, and if he could *procure it too* of his Reader, he need not doubt the happy issue and success of this Discourse; and that is a certain *Commodity* which Men call *Candour*; a very scarce and dear Commodity it is grown, since the Writers of this Age Appealed from the Tribunal of their Judicious and Learned, to the Chancery of their courteous and candid Readers.

If any should be so Critical as to enquire, what this *Candour* is; he may understand that it is a native *Whiteness* of Judgment, that has not yet received the *Prejudicate Tincture* of any Colour, but retains its *Indifferency and Neutrality* to every Customer, Such a mind the Reader is desired to bring to the Perusing of this Chapter; that he be neither Black nor Blew, his affections devirginated neither with *Aff.* nor *Diff.* but a meer *Rasa Tabula*. But how much of this *Candour* might pleasure him, is a great Question; for if a small Quantity would serve his occasions, no more than may incline one to think he never expected a Bishoprick, or more than a first-rate *Benefice*, for writing this elaborate work; I have just such a parcel of *Candour* lying by me, that will exactly fit his turn. But this will not do! He has *bespoke so much of his Reader*, That he will believe, it is not any delight he takes to rake in the Wounds of his Brethren and fellow-Christians, that prompts him to this undertaking: A *Candour* to beleive all this! It must be a stretching white-leather-*Candour*, that will reach to the beleif of such Incredibles, That he that makes Wounds does not delight to rake in them: that he that forges Crimes, takes no pleasure in divulging them: that he who reproaches his Brethren most passionately renders their repute; That he who would ruin Mens bodies, has such a compassion for their Souls: I confess I cannot furnish him with such a Lot of *Candour*: but if I meet with *Apella* the Jew, or any other *Candid Wiseacres*, that have enough to spare, he may possibly hear further.

Proceed we therefore to the next and immediate Causes of the Distractions of the Church of England.

1. The first assigned Cause, is popular rashness and injudiciousness. Whom he should intend by the people, that are so rash and injudici-

ons, I am at a great loss in my Conjectures: One division of a Kingdom, is into the *Sovereign*, and his *Leige-people*. Now it must not be the *people* in this Notion, that are so hair-brain'd, for that would include the Clergy. Again, the Subjects of a Kingdom may be divided into the *Nobility*, and the *common people*: but neither, under this notion must rashness and injudiciousness be charged upon the people; for besides that, this would still reflect upon the *Inferiour Clergy*, it would also cast reproach upon the *Peoples Representatives*. There is therefore another distinction of us all, we are all either of the *Clergy*, or the *Laitie*, that is in plain *English*, the *Populace* or *Volge*: and there is good ground for this classical distinction, not only because we hear of *Sermons ad Clerum*, that is, to those who are *Gods Lot, Portion, and Inheritance*; and others *ad Populum*, the common *Herd and Drove of Animals*: But because we read of old, such a division made by the *Learned and Judicious Pharisees*, Joh. 7. 49. *Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on him, but this People, that knows not the Law, is accursed?* And yet it will be thought scandalously harsh to fix the guilt of popular rashness and injudiciousness upon the people in this acceptation; for under this denomination will come not only the *Nobility and Gentry* of a Nation, but the *Prince* himself, unless he should take on him the *Office of the Priesthood*. We must therefore find out another sort of people that must bear the burden of this reproach: that which comes next to my thoughts, and offers fairest to assail the difficulty, is the distinction between the *Conformists* and the *Nonconformists*: and thus we shall need to seek no further for this grand Cause of Nonconformity. The Nonconformists are a *Rabble* out of *rash and injudicious* people; and there needed not half so many words to assert it, though twice as many will not prove it.

This Cause of *Popular rashness*, is like the *Chameleon*, which they say accommodates it self to the *nearest Subject*, and will resemble all *colours* save one, only it's not susceptible of that which our *Enquirer* wants most, *Candour*: For the *Dissenters* complain of the injudiciousness of the people, the rashness of their *Censures*, how little they understand their *Principles*, how wrongfully they interpret their practices; and thus at last it wheels about to be a *reason of Conformity*.

There is no Theme upon which School-boys are more frank in their *Satyrical* *Invectives*, than of the *common people*, that it is πολυκέφαλον *Bestia multiceps*, a *Hydra* with many heads;

and yet in none of them, *vel Consilium, vel Ratio; vel Discrimen, vel Diligentia*; so saith his *Compere* the great Roman Orator.

But I admire how these Men of wit and Judgment would live, if the people whom they so undervalue as not worthy to wipe their shoes, did not Mow and Toil, and Plow and Sow, and Spin, that they might lie at ease, arrayed like Solomon in all his Glory.

The method of our Enquirer in managing this business, is this, First, he will speak to the purpose, then a little nearer to the purpose, and last of all close home to the purpose.

1. That which he says to the purpose, is this: *when weak persons judge of the Determinations and Counsels of wiser men: and those that pierce no further than the meer surface of things, pass a Verdict upon those whose Judgments are profound and deep; there can no good issue be expected.*

The Vulgar indeed do not wear the Head-pieces of States-men, nor the Helmets of Commanders: they have no need for, and therefore no use of them: they pretend to no Authority to inspect the secrets of State, to dive into the Intrigues and Mysteries of Government; but yet under correction, they are a degree removed from Beasts, and pretend and plead a right to judge of their own Actions, as they are accountable to the Divine Majesty. They are not concern'd to enquire upon what reasons the Legislators shall bring in a Law? but they are concerned to enquire into the lawfulness of the thing, that they may give a more humane, chearful, and rational Obedience. Understand me in things especially relating to the immediate Service of God, and their Acceptance with him therein: In other things, they can part with their own Right; and though the Command should prove unrighteous, they may righteously submit; but in matters of Religion they ought to be conducted by more manly Arguments.

Gods Worship is a Service reasonable, and if I must not use my Reason there to judge of its lawfulness, it had been an advantage to be made, what some would make us, Brutes: for as he that has lost his smell, has this to comfort himself withal, that as he enjoys not the satisfaction of the worlds perfumes, so he is not tormented with its stinks. Thus though the Beasts have not the contentment of enfranchised reason, they are discharged the cumber and torment which necessarily arises from restraint put upon the dictates of Right Reason. I shall never therefore reconcile the contradictions of those who cry up a Rational Clergy, and

and yet at the same time revile a *Rational Laity*.

There was once one *Virgilius* Bishop of *Salzburg*, that held an old Opinion, that there were *Antipodes*: the Pope it seems suspecting some dreadful *Heretical pravity* to lurk under that uncouth Opinion, convenes, condemns, executes him for a downright Heretick: Our Enquirer, protests *He can by no means commend the Zeal of the Bishop*. Its like there was some of that popular rashness and injudiciousness in it: But what would he have had the poor honest man have done? subscribe that *twice two make five and twenty*? or against Mathematical Demonstration swear, and declare, that the *Globe of the earth has no Diameter*? I grant that weak persons (and we are all so weak) ought to suspect themselves, and give very much to the Counsels and Reasons of wiser men: But to deny our Reason in its most easie velitations, and familiar instances, for fear of being Schismatics, or causing Distractions, is but a Whimsy, or a Wind-mill got into some mens heads; and as it came in, so let it come onr again at its leisure.

But this example of *Virgilius* was untowardly applied; for if the good Bishop had on his side *Demonstration* against *Papal Determination*, as it proves that the *private reason* may be more Orthodox than the *publick*; so I dare refer it to any ordinary body to judge whether in case any Distractions or separations had followed in the Church thereon, the Pope or the Bishop had been the Culpable cause of them? The latter for asserting that which was simply impossible, should be otherwise; or the former, for executing him as an Heretick for not denying a demonstrable verity?

2. But now he will come nearer to the purpose. I assure him he had need; for hitherto we have been a filthy way off: Its an Observation not more ancient than true, That the same thing seldom pleases the many and the few. And a wise Observation it was, whoever first observed it to the World! I once heard a Grave Divine in the Pulpit, after all the Civil Prefaces of the Learning, Piety, and Orthodoxie of that Father, quote *St. Austin* for such another Observation, not more Ancient then true, *Omnēs homines sunt peccatores*! All the Question here will be, whether the many, or the few are more probable to be in the right? Oh no doubt the few: for the many are the people, the *Vulgar*: why then I refer it again, whether popular Judgment can be the Cause or Reason of Nonconformity, when the many are infallibly of that Religion which the Law allows and encourages, and the few ever of that way which is discouraged and persecuted? I 2

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'But (*says he*) wise men generally take middle Counsels: That was indeed a little nearer the purpose, if not too near: for hence the World will discern, that many Church-men are none of the wisest, who are all for high flying, or high trotting Councils: But what are those middle Counsels? He tells us in the instance of Erasmus, who was the glory of his time and Countrey, for the sagacity of his Wit, and simplicity of his Temper; and he indeed hung in the middle between Popery and Protestantism; or as some say, between Heaven and Hell: so that hence we learn another secret, what are those middle Counsels which wise men would take, if occasion served; but then I doubt the many, and not the few would entertain those middle Counsels.

I meet with this moderation the word at every corner, but moderation the thing is as great a rarity as Candour; moderation in Ceremonies, that's a Vice: hence we hear of these famous Sermons: Conformity according to Canon justified, and the new way of moderation reprov'd. A Sermon preached at Exon, in the Cathedral of St. Peter: At the Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God Anthony — This is that moderation our Enquirer attacks so briskly, p. 25, charging the best of Clergy-men with debauching their Office, and undermining the Church: but now to be moderate like Erasmus, between Canterbury and Rome that's your commendable temper.

And such a Religion did Calvin fear, like the Interim of Germany, the Articles of Hen. 8. ΕΙΒΡΙΚΟΝ of Zeno, the ΕΞΘΙΣΙΣ of Heraclius, the ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ of Constance. Such a one as was too high for this world, and too low for the next: such a one as whether or no it provided a Heaven in the other world, would make a Purgatory of this: Calvin was taught when to be Zealous, and when Remiss: to be Zealous in Gods cause, and Remiss in his own, which seems somewhat a better frame than theirs who are fire and tow for their own inventions, but as cool as patience it self in the concerning-Truths of the Gospel.

To prove the moderation of our Church, and that she cuts by a Thread (or by Threads) between both these extremes; he produces an Argument both from Papists and Protestants; Those of the Church of Rome cannot but confess all is good in our Liturgy: Protestants on the other hand generally acknowledg the main to be good; and so between them both give a glorious testimony to this Church as guilty of neither extrem. There is nothing more childish than to uſe

an Argument, which with the same case may be retorted as used; for those of the *Roman Church* condemn the Liturgy as *defectiu: in necessariis and fundamentals*, and Protestants complain of *many Redundancies and Superfluities*; and so between them both, they charge her as guilty of both the extremes.

But I am afraid he has promised himself more respect from *Rome*, than they will allow her. If they will confess that all is good in the Liturgy now, I am sure they would not have confessed so much, when it pray'd to be delivered from the Tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable Enormities. But if it hath been so well amended to gratifie the Papists, give it one amendment more to gratifie the Protestants, that they also may say, *There is nothing but what is good in the Liturgy.*

I have read, that when the Ambassador of the Duke of *Brandenburg* presented his Mandate in the Council of *Trent*, he shewed his Matters good affection to, and Reverence of the Fathers of that Synod; They answered very discreetly, 'That the Council had heard his discourse with great content, especially that part of 'it, wherein the Elector doth submit himself to the Council, and 'promiseth to observe the Decrees of it, hoping that his deeds 'will be answerable to his word. But here (as the Historian observes) 'the Council pretended a promise of Ten thousand, when 'the bargain was but for Ten. The Ambassador proffered Reverence, and they, accept of Obedience. And thus the Fathers of the Council of *Carthage*, giving an account to *Innocent I.* that they had condemned *Celestius* and *Pelagius*, desired him to conform himself to their Declaration: He commends them in his Answer, that 'remembring the old Tradition, and Ecclesiastical Discipline, 'they had referred all to his Judgment, whence all ought to learn 'whom to absolve, and whom to condemn. An usual and pious 'allurement of the Church of *Rome*, which yielding to the Infirmitie of her Children, maketh shew to believe, that they have performed their Duty. By the same Artifice would our Enquirer wheedle the Nonconformists into a good mood, to acknowledg the Liturgy to be good in the main, and that there are only *some Redundancies* which they would have taken away.

3. And now at last he will come home, and close to the purpose. That which I chiefly intend (says he) 'is that a great part of 'men have not their minds Elevated above the Horizon of their 'Bodies, nor take an estimate of any thing, but by its Impression

‘upon their senses: from whence (say I) it must needs follow, That most men judge of the *Excellency of a Religion*, as it approves it self to their *carnal interests*, and *ambitious Expectancies*; and if that will make to the purpose to prove, that popular injudiciousness is a cause of separation from the Church, let him make his best of it: some think it proves the contrary.

Two things he will spend his Rhetorick upon as he goes along, the Excellency of the Liturgy, and the Excellency of his own Preaching; which last we have had enough of to satiety, if not to nauseousness, very lately.

The Excellency of the Liturgy lies, in being composed plainly, gravely, and modestly, no turgid or swelling words, no novelty of Phrase or Method; no Luxuriancy of wit or Fancy; And might not this have passed for proof of the Excellency of the Homilies? If the plain Composition, the Gravity, the Modesty of the Homilies, innocent of all turgid or swelling expressions, free from novelty of phrase, or curiosity of method, could not procure a reprieve, but they are condemned to silence, and instead of them, we are all for Artificial Composes, sugared phrase that will melt in the mouth, And method, such as brings Forreigners to England to be instructed in it; Quaintness of Expression, and Luxuriancy of Wit and Fancy; why then was not the Liturgy a little lickt over, and trimmed up more spruce-ly? But if those Characters of plainness, gravity, modesty, humble Expressions, ordinary Language, be the Glory of the prayers, why not of the Preaching also? the old Homilies were too coarse spun for modern Ears to hear, the phrase too heavy and common, the method cryptic and obscure; but Preaching is now more finical, and accommodated to the Itching ears of well bred Christians; we are got into the mode of *Lovesdays Letters*, and *Cassandra and Cleopatra*; as if God did not understand strong lines, as well as the Ladies; and as if we were not as much obliged to tell the People their duty, as God our wants in small English.

Popular rashness and Injudiciousness are great evils, as it appears; but how to apply a proper and suitable Remedy to the evil, is all the Skill. And first, the Church of Rome (says he) have a Cure for this; they appropriate all Judgment to the Clergy, and deal with the rest of mankind as Sots and Ideots. But the Church of England makes not her self the Mistress of Mens faith, or imposes upon their understandings; she teaches that our Saviour hath delivered the mind of God touching the points of Necessary belief  
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plainly, and in other lesser matters she allows a Judgment of Discretion. And will not this *Judgment of Discretion*, or Indiscretion, become a cause of all those Divisions, Separations and Schisms of which so loud a peal has been rung in our Ears? And is not this *a new Name for popular rashness and injudiciousness*? 'Oh (says he) since the peace of the Church often depends upon such points as Salvation does not; and since in many of these, every Man is not a competent Judge, but must either be in danger of being deceived himself, or deceiving others, or of necessity must trust some body wiser than himself, she recommends as the safer way for such private persons to comply with publick determinations; and in so advising she joyntly consults the peace of the Church, and the quiet of Mens Consciences. These matters seem very Artificially put together, and the taking them afunder will discover their weakness. Let me have a solid Reason given, why the peace of the Church should be laid upon those things which Salvation depends not upon? Is the peace of the Church grown so cheap and vile that it should be sold for things unnecessary? One while he cries up peace so high, p. 180. 'That he protests, if a Man must suffer Martyrdome, he thinks it equally acceptable to God to lay down a Mans life for preservation of the peace and unity of the Church, as in Testimony against flat Idolatry: Are they not to be admired that value peace more than their Lives, and yet will venture it upon indifferent things? Are they not more to be admired, that extol peace so highly, and yet sacrifice it to their own meer wills and pleasures? But is not this yet the greatest wonder, that peace should depend on that which Salvation does not; and yet he will sacrifice his Live for it, as soon as against that, upon which his Eternal Damnation depends? 2. If Men be not competent Judges of their own Actions, what is become of that *Judgment of Discretion*, wherewith we were even now gratified? Is this the *Judgment of Discretion*, to surrender our Consciences upon Discretion? The Romanists, who appropriate all Judgment to the Clergy, and deal with the rest of Mankind as Ideots and Sots, could have said no more, than that Men are not competent Judges of their own good: And if we may not be allowed a liberty to judg for our selves in those lesser matters debatable amongst Christians, much less in those great matters which they say admit of no debate: And how much our Authors Cure is better than that of the Romanists, I know not; I think they are both worse then the Disease. 3. Why is not the danger of trusting o-

thers, as great as trusting to the word of God? Mine Eyes may be presumed to see for my conduct as faithfully as another Mans; and my own Conscience will probably be as faithfull to my Eternal concerns as any ones I could find. And I have tried it, that its much easier to obtain a moral certainty that I have *the mind and will of God*, than that I have grasped the mind of any Church from their most Apthenrick Articles, or Confessions of Faith. 4 Why should others be troubled, that I am not so wise as they? Its none of my trouble that they use their liberty without despising, whilst I exercise that which God hath given me without judging. If we must trust others in composing worship and Divine service for us, Terms of Communion of Christians, where is then the difference between *That*, and the Popish Implicit Faith? *This will make the People Sheep indeed, but silly ones*, I am sure; such is my weakness, I can see no difference between *blind Obedience* and *trusting others with the determination of it*; or between *implicit Faith*, and *trusting others as the Reason of my Belief*; either then here's *no Remedy*, or one worse than the Disease: The disease at worst is but to enjoy a liberty in those things *Christ left free*; nor is there any necessity that freedom should be abridged; and the *Remedy* to trust others blindfold with our Consciences, whom we have no assurance will be over tender of them; and if we had, have no Commission from Christ to intrust them any where but in his own hands.

But what now if the people be foolish, proud, and contentious; what remedy has the Church then? *Why* she only declares them guilty of sin and contumacy, and casts them out of Communion. But what if they be humble, and meek, and peaceable, only cannot by searching, studying, praying, discoursing, see the lawfulness of the imposed Terms of Communion? Must the Church *declare them contumacious, and cast them out of Communion*? It may tempt us to think that is no remedy of Gods prescribing, that deals alike with humble and proud; the peaceable and contentious. But for all this demureness, I doubt there are other Remedies besides a Declaration, other Weapons besides Paper-Pellets. There is a *Significavit*, a *Writ de Excommunicato capiendo, de Heretico comburendo*. An Oath of Abjuration, a *Warrant of Distress*, if they submit not to those impositions, upon which *Salvation depends not*; and in their judgments, such as are sinful, and then damnation is hazarded by them.

I have often admired the modesty of the Church of Rome: She never put any man to death: She never burnt any at a Stake: Its not

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for *Holy Men, Men of Peace* to shed blood, to be Instruments of Cruelty; No, the Church only delivers them over to the *secular Power*, and what he does with them, how he treats them, she knows nothing: Thus having drawn in the Magistrate to do her Drudgery, she *wipes her mouth, washes her hands*, and protests she is *Innocent of the blood of these men*,

An Objection was timely foreseen that might be made against his discourse, and like a person that knew how to be friendly to himself, he has put it in favourable and gentle Terms

'This will equally extend to all other Reformed Churches, as well as our own; and might have brought forth all the evil we complain of, and impure to it, in former Ages as well as now; for the generality of the People were not much wiser than now.

That is the Protestant Churches have their Members as lyable to mistake beyond Sea, as ours on this side; they have *private Reason* as well as we, and a *Judgment of discretion* too, and so had the Primitive Times too; Christians then were equally in danger of being seduced by their own injudiciousness, and yet the one continued in much peace, and the other still continues so, without the *Remedy of imposing mystical Ceremonies*: Nay, to speak properly, without the *disease of Impositions*: The *not imposing doubtful things as the terms of Communion*, were with them the Prophylacticks of Schisms and Divisions, and the imposing of them (which is strange) is the Therapeutick of Schisms and Divisions; to which he answers two things.

§ 1. 'That other Churches found the effects of Ignorance and 'Arrogance more or less, as well as we: To which might be returned that they found it not in those things which they left free; but if at any time they laid the weight of the Churches peace upon unneccessaries, they found in proportion the same effects of the same cause, which we have found: 'But (*says he*) that was to be ascribed not to the happiness of their Constitutions, but to the unhappiness of their Conditions. I confess I am not altogether of his mind; it was mainly due to the happiness of their Constitutions; there were fewer contentions, because fewer bones of contention; and less of Divisions, because they united upon a Scriptural, and therefore secure bottom.

That the Church of Corinth needed a check for her Divisions, is very true, and a smart one she deserved: And 'tis as true too, that the Apostle had not recourse to our modern Remedies, to ex-

ert his Apostolical power, to silence the clamour by darting the Thunderbolt of Excommunication against the weaker Party : and yet he had a far more specious pretence, than any Church-Governours can now justly claim : His Apostolical Commission to *plant and water Churches*, which would have commanded *Reverence* to his Person, and conciliated *Authority* to his Determinations : and yet he either had no such power, or durst not use it, but took the *Healing way*, tolerating things tolerable, and pressing them mutually to Love and peace under their various apprehensions about *Mint, Annise and Cummin*. But yet he thinks, That the Reason why *Primitive Christians*, whilst under persecution, had one heart and mind, was, because they submitted their private Fancies to publick Safety ; Which is only the assigning of an Imaginary cause for a Real one. *Primitive Christians*, whilst surrounded with Adversaries, were of one heart and mind in the main, and the true Reason was, because their dangers and pressing-fears had not yet let in that *Prelatical Imposing Spirit* into the Guides of the Church, which ease and Liberty afterwards produced. And though we dare not charge our Divisions upon *Peace, Plenty and Liberty*, which are great mercies to a sinful people : yet we would lay the Saddle upon the right Horse, the blame at the right door : 'Tis not the injudiciousness of the People, who are willing to be quiet, and accept of rest upon tolerable terms : but the obstinacy of Clergymen, who make their own Wills the reason of their Injunctions, not considering that all mens Intellectuals are not of one size and height : and yet as if Consciences were to be fooled with, Mens Souls sported with, they necessitate the People either to act against their Light, or fall under the severe lash of a Pœnal Statute.

§ 2. 'That these evils broke out no sooner (*says he*) is due to the contentment generally took in their first Emerging out of the darkness and superstitions of Popery : Very true! they were so full of admiration at what God had done for them : that they considered not what further to ask God to do for them : so transported that they were out of *Egypt*, that they never considered how short the *Wilderness* was of the *promised Land* : And hence he might have answered himself, p. 13. 'If there be such a dangerous Affinity between the Church of *England* and *Rome*, how came it to pass that *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, &c. laid down their lives in testimony to this against that ? *Rome* was not built, nor will it be destroyed in one day. Our first Martyrs laid down their lives in Testimony,

that



that *Rome* was guilty of dangerous <sup>3</sup>Doctrines, but not that we had nothing remaining, that needed a Reformation.

2. *A second cause is, That a great Part of this Nation having been leavened with Jewish Superstitions or Traditions, hath therefore been indisposed to an Uniform reception of, and Perseverence in the Reformation of Religion held forth by this Church.*

When I first read the charge of Judaism brought in against the Dissenters, I remembered what I had met with in the virulent Titles of some Lutheran Books: *Calvinus Judaizans, Calvinianorum Nestorianismus, Calvino-papismus, Novus Calvinistarum Deus*: to which we may add, *Calvino-Turcismus*, and some others. I began to cast about in my thoughts for the reason of such an Imputation: have they set up an Image of *Aaronical Priesthood*? Have they their *High-Priest, their Inferior Priests and Levites*, attired in the *Linen Ephod*? With all the Accoutrements of the *Aaronical Wardrobe*? And that they may more exactly symbolize therewith, have they provided for their Priests an *Altar*? Settled upon them a *Levitical maintenance*? And to carry on the parallel, have they erected Temples distinguished by *sacred Apartments*? Have they their *Holy and most Holy place*, Chancelled in for the greater Reverence of the *sacred Mystries*, to secure them from the Approaches of the prophane and injudicious Rabble? and have they all these enclosed within *Holy Ground*; And therather because *Dionysius* assures us. *That the Christians in his time, had solemn Temples like the Jews; and the Chancel severed asith special sanctifications from the rest of the Church: whereas (says he) the Christians of the first age made their assemblies both in such private places, and in such simplicity as the Apostles did.* I considered again, whether the Nonconformists had not introduced a *pompous pedagogie of Ceremonies*, and imposed them upon the People? Whether they might not perhaps have instituted some Feasts and Holy-days, upon an old Judaical account, as of the Circumcision, Purification? Or whether they had not appointed *some Office*, or solemn *special Service* for Lustration of Women after Childbirth, in correspondence with the *Jewish Purification of Women after their uncleanness*? Whether they observed any sacred time Analogical to the Passover, or had any Foot-steps of the ancient *distinction of Meats* into *clean and unclean*? Or any thing that might give cause of suspicion, that they had by a *κακοζηλία* revived *Moses*, his extraordinary *Quadragesimal Abstinence*? Or whether they introduced Temple intru-  
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mental Musick? whether loud sounding Cymbals or Organs, having such good proof in *Durantis* his *Rationale*, from that Text, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!* And when I could find no tract of reason for the charge upon these accounts, I went to enquire of the *Enquirer*

And it does appear (by his talk) that a more secret and mysterious Judaism than all this, has of old been rooted in this Nation, that no Ecclesiastical Pick-axes have been able to extirpate it; for (*says he*) the greatest difficulty that *Austin* the Monk found here, was to bring the Inhabitants from the observation of Easter, and some other Rites, according to the manner of the Jewish and Eastern Churches, to that of the Roman and Western: and the doing it, cost the lives of twelve hundred Monks, who stubbornly opposed his innovations.

This *Austin* was certainly as Formal a Fop as ever this poor Nation was harassed with. Two third parts of his whole Ministerial or Apostolical work, was Ceremony; for upon these conditions he propounded Peace to the *Britains*. 'If you will in these three things obey me, in celebrating Easter in due time: in Bap-  
'zing according to the maner of the Roman Church, and in Preaching the Word to the Nation; all other Ceremonies, Fashions and Customs, though they be contrary to ours, yet we will willingly bear with them. Was not this a person of great moderation? But why not condescend in *those two*, as well as *all the rest*? Oh, it's the Religious policy of *Rome*, to reserve as much of Ceremony, as, like a *Quit-rent*, will serve to Recognize the Papal Sovereignty; and that point of *Sovereignty alone* will in due time fetch in the other. To own that Churches power to impose, its Jurisdiction, to award *terms of Communion*, though but in one single instance, is the *delivery of a Twig and a Turf*, which give her *Livery and Seisin* of the Conscience in the name of the whole Man. But if *Austins* Reformation was so *Ceremonious in it self*, and so *bloody in its effects*, which are, if not inseparably, yet common-linked together: If he could have spared *their blood*, they could well have spared his *Ceremonies*.

But was this *Austin* so great a *Saint* that he must be quoted for the famous Reformer of Judaism? Or were those Martyres of *Bangor* such wicked Jews, that the Nonconformists should be their Spawn? No 'This *Austin* made our Ancestors only Romanists, he found them Christians before: and perhaps of a better, and  
more

'more generous race of Religion, than that he engrafted upon the 'old Stock. Then it seems that *Christians*, however *Judaizing* in one instance, may be of a Nobler temperature than an old doing Ceremony-monger, that for a meer Caprice, would *minge their blood with their Sacrifices*: But how does the Example come home to the purpose? Austin was mad upon his Ceremonies: The Britains were tenacious of their *Easter*? Wherein are Dissenters concerned in their quarrels, who neither dogmatize with the *Quarto decimanes* or *Quinto-decimanes*? Let the one plead Traditions from Papias and St. John, with the Eastern, the other pretend the Pope and St. Peter, with the Western Christians, we can be content they should scuffle it out, about Goats wool, or Moon shine in the water.

Our Enquirer nevertheless, will give us an Anatomy of Nonconformity, and lay open their principles to view, that it shall appear that a vein of *Judaism* runs through the whole Body of Dissenters.

1. The first Vein is: *Their great Hypothesis is, That nothing is lawful in the Service of God, but what is expressly prescribed in the Scripture.* Which proposition needs many limitations, before the Dissenters will Father it, and when it is so limited, they will challenge him to prove, that there's the least Capillary of Judaism in it: And 1. If by *Nothing* he understand *no meer Circumstance*, as of general time, place, he may know what they have told the World a thousand times, they hold *many such things* lawful, which are not prescribed particularly in the Scripture: but if by *Nothing* he will understand *no Ceremony*, being an outward and visible sign of inward and invisible Grace; they do assert, that *no such thing* is lawful in worship, but what is prescribed in the Scripture. 2. If by *in the service of God* he mean, only an action accompanying Gods Worship, not of Religious Application, but such as is common to civil and ordinary affairs, they deny it any principle of theirs, that nothing may be done in time of Worship, by the Worshipers, that is not commanded by the Scriptures. But if by *in the service of God*, be meant, *so in it*, that it is *part of it*, they own it to be their avowed Judgment, that nothing is lawful in the service of God, as a part of worship, which is not commanded by God himself. 3. If by *expressly commanded*, be intended, what is *literally and Syllabically* called so; they disown it as any Hypothesis of theirs: But if by *expressly commanded*, be intended what is either *expressly*, or by just consequence derived thence, they are ready to justify it without fear of Judaizing, That nothing, no outward visible sign of inward and invisible Grace, is lawful in the service of God, as a part of that service,

vice, which is not expressly, or by just and clear consequence prescribed in the Scripture, not excluding whatever help from the Light of Nature, to give us a fuller prospect into the mind of God in his word. Nor ought this to be stigmatized as a principle peculiar to the *Jews*, but common to them, with all other true worshippers of God, from the beginning of the World. To impose a *part of worship*, is not only an Imposition upon *Man*, but upon *God*. The Imposer does not only compel *Man* to offer, but *God* to accept what is offered : for seeing the *End* of all worship is *Acceptation* with him *whom we worship*, this *End* must influence our whole worship. And this is supposed by the Church of England, who prays (or invites to pray) for true Repentance and the Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present : Now its neither our own fancies, nor the will of Men, but the word of God, that is a competent Declaration of what will please our Creator. Dissenters plead further : That the same God, that jealous God who commanded the *Jews* not to add to Gods commands, commanded it upon Reasons common to all mankind. It was well urged against the *Jews* by the learned Author of *Orig. Sacr.* p. 214. ' That the meaning of that strict Prohibition, *Deut.* 12. 32. was no other than ' that Men should not of their own Heads offer to find out new ' ways of worship, as *Jeroboam* did ; but that Gods Revelation of ' his own will, in all its different degrees, was to be the adequate ' Rule of the way and parts of his own worship. And I would ' fain know of the *Jews*, whether their own severe and strict prohibition of things, not at all forbidden in the Law of God, came ' not near the adding to Gods Law ; Again, God having given no rule to direct us in excogitating and imposing new worship, it's impossible but we should mistake ; or if we should hit now and then upon some happy contrivance, we must thank his blind goddess Fortune, rather than the fruitfulness of our own understandings : And this loose principle would make the World a *Pantheon*, or encumber it with a *παραίσυα*, and would multiply Religions according to the multitudes of the Churches, as they of old multiplied their Idols, according to the number of their Cities. They do also still believe from *Heb.* 3. That Christ was faithful to him that appointed him the Lord of the Church, in making all necessary provisions for the encreasing, confirming, and perfecting their graces ; for their comfort, edification, and all spiritual necessities, without a ny new Additional contrivances for those ends: Nay they say yet further ; That as these new ways and parts of worship, do im-

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Preach Christs faithfulness in discharge of his trust, so they do invade his Regal Office too, in making new Laws to bind the Conscience; An usurpation which no Earthly Prince would endure; for when a Prince has established his Laws, though he supposes, that the Inferior Magistrates must have *time and place* to execute them in, which are left at liberty according as emergency in particular cases shall invite to determine them, yet he allows them to make no new Laws, upon pretence of necessity to execute *the old ones*, nor to institute new Observances, under colour of more effectual managing old Customs: And it seems reasonable, that the People should not practise what Ministers may not Preach; nor the Church impose what it cannot command in Christs name; but it can only use Christs name to urge whatsoever he has commanded them; nay the Enquirer, when perhaps he did not think of after-mischief, told us, p. 4. That 'we incur St. Pauls Anathema, which he denounces against him (whosoever he be, nay if an Angel from Heaven) that shall Preach any other Doctrine, than what hath been received: And if the Church has received any such command to invent and impose Ceremonies, she can tell us where others may read it as well as herself. And to conclude at present, they say, That this one Principle granted, That the Church may impose upon her Members whatever is *not expressly forbidden*, does either put the Body of Christians under a more heavy Yoke than that of the Jews, or else torment them with fears, that they may be so: And indeed supposing this exorbitant power to impose parts of worship or Ceremonies, or any of these things in Debate, the condition of the Jews was much more desirable in this respect than that of Christians. For,

§ 1. Their Law-giver was *Jehova*, who had an absolute and unlimited power over them, and they that are Gods creatures will not grudge to be his Servitors: He was Lord paramount of Worship and Conscience, and might be not be allowed to do what he would with his own? He is the God of the Spirits of all flesh, and shall they not live in subjection to him, who expect to live in a Kingdom with him? Since there is a necessity of obedience, it sweetens it unspeakably, that it's both Interest and Privilege to obey; and that he who requires obedience is their God, a God whose Will is the rule of Righteousness; and therefore the most satisfactory Reason of his commands, and his Creatures Duty; an implicit obedience is then Honourable, when God calls for it.

§ 2. As

§ 2. As their Law-giver had *ἐξουσίαν*, authority to command so he had *δυναμιν*, a power to influence the weakest Elements. He was *ἀνολογέτως*, and had absolute Sovereignty, and *παντοκράτης*, one of Almighty power, which was a double encouragement to the observers of his precepts: For 1. He was hereby able to secure the obedient in his Service; upon which account Christ claims the Legislative power over Conscience. *Jam. 4. 12. There is one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy.* 2 By this Power he could render efficacious these Rudiments, which in themselves were but *beggerly Ordinances*: and produce by them Spiritual and Supernatural effects. And I am enclined the rather to think that God has not committed the Moral Power of instituting, much less the Sovereign Power of Imposing religious Ceremonies and observances, because he has not communicated that other Power to bless their own appointments, nor invigorate them with success: God may well be allowed to command what he pleases, seeing he can and will bless whatsoever he commands.

§ 3. Their Law-giver was Faithful, one to whom they might securely commit their Consciences; one with whom they might with the greatest satisfaction of Heart commit their Souls; He that has a sole right to any thing, will be faithful in keeping it, because 'tis his own; and who may better be intrusted with the Guardianship of Worship and all Religion, than their Owner? But though we ought not to be Censorious, yet we may, and ought to exercise some prudence and caution to whom we resign our selves in matters of Religion, though the best of Men, not knowing how they may use us, but well knowing, that we may more easily Capivate our selves to the Will of an Imposer, than being once enthralled, vindicate our selves into our Christian Liberty: Or if for no other Reason, yet for this, because they are but Men.

§ 4. The Jewish Yoke was a determinate Yoke: It was *Onus*, but *Determinatum*. A Burden, but a stinted Burden; It's no small alleviation to the Labourers toil, when he knows his work: to the Traveller, that he knows his Journeys end: The Jews had their work before them but upon the Modern Principle: The burden of the Christians is Indefinite, which is but a better word for Infinite: The Truth is, in these humane impositions we see the beginning, but no Man knows the end of them; it's a *Nemo scit*. Our load must be bounded with no other Limits than a Churches Will, and that Will perhaps bounded with no other than its Power, since it's canoniz'd for good

good Divinity, That *the Church may impose whatever is Decent*, and that *the Church is Judge of what is Decent*, tho' who the Church is, is not so certain.

S. 5. Their Law-giver was one of known and approved Tenderness, who either apportioned his work to their strength, or their strength to his work; he fitted the Yoke to their Neck, and their Neck to the Yoke. The main thing that renders Christ's own Yoke *so easie*, his Burden *so light*, is, that as his *Authority imposes*, so his *Strength supports*. Men may lay heavy burdens on our Shoulders; but where there is most need, cannot touch them with one of their Fingers.

S. 6. Their Law-giver was one, who in all his Impositions consulted *their own good* and benefit, as well as exercised *his own Authority*: The Jews wrought hard indeed, but their work had much of *wages* in't. The design of their Mystical Rites and Ceremonies directed them to a Saviour: *Legal Administrations* well ordered, were *Gospel Privileges*: Before Christ came, Ceremonies were *Illustrantia*, such as discovered the Person, Nature, Office and Grace of the Messiah; *a Candle is better than no Light*; but to us they are all *Obscurantia*, such as *darken the state of Christianity*. As *before the Sun rising*, the Prodromous Clouds, whose edges are fringed with Gold, comfort us with the hopes of an approaching greater Light, which when the Sun is up, do but darken the Horizon. Thus did Ceremonies *Illustrate Christ* at the *Annuntiation*, but *obscure him* at his *Advent*.

It will be needless further to Vindicate the Dissenters: I shall leave the n to the Enquirers Patronage; who by the same Reason, that he justifies the Church of *England* from Popery, will I hope clear the Nonconformists from Judaism, p. 12. *All* (says he) *is not to be accounted Popery which is held or practised by the Church of Rome*: Nor (say I) is all to be accounted Judaism which was either the principle or the practice of the *Jewish Church*: p. 13. *Nor is it Reasonable to say such a thing is received from the Church of Rome, because it is there to be found, unless it be to be found nowhere else.*

And as little Reason to say the Dissenters have received this Principle from the Jews, [That no worship is lawful (for that is their Principle) but what is prescribed by the Scripture] unless it were found nowhere else. But this was a Principle so clear in the Light of Nature, that Numa the great Ritualist of Heathen Rome, durst not hope that ever his Ceremonies would ever obtain amongst a



people that had eyes in their Heads, unless he had, or pretended to have, a Conference with his Goddess *Ageria*. Thus the *Palladium* of Troy, that Mystick Ceremony, in which the fate of their City was wrap'd up, is supposed to have come down from *Minerva*; the famous Image in *Diana's Temple*, *Acts* 19. 35, is supposed to be *Διοσκήτης*, fallen from Jupiter; and whilst the World was silly enough to be imposed upon by those little Artifices, we had scarce a New Shrine, Altar, Place of Pilgrimage erected, but upon pretence of some rising from the Dead, or an Angel from Heaven, or a Letter from the Virgin *Mary*, or some such Pious Frauds and Religious Cheats, which the Priests had at their Fingers ends.

Let us now consider the *Enquirers* Discourse upon this Principle, 'That all absolutely necessities are so determined, we readily grant, (*says he*) and that all those Rites prescribed by our Saviour are necessary to be observed, we will yield them; but that nothing is lawful, but what is to be found so prescribed, we utterly deny. And so do we ! Let that end the Controversie: When Rhetoricians have flanted it out in fine Language, and Ruffled a little in Phrase, apposite words and expressions, they have satisfied their Office, and are not obliged by the Rules of their Art, either to state the Question, or speak to it: *something may be practised which is not prescribed*, that we grant; but from *something* to *every thing* is too great a Leap for *Bucephalus*: From *practising* to *prescribing* is another large stride; from *Circumstances* to *Ceremonies* is a third; from *Civil* things to *Sacred* is one more; from *Indifferent* to *Necessary Conditions of Church-Comunion* may go for another; and from the common Accidents that attend the *Worshippers as Men*, to *Parts of worship*, are Inferences which we can neither make to lead or drive.

2. We come now to a second Judaical Principle: *That all Princes and Law-givers are bound to conform the Municipal Laws of their several Dominions to the Institutions of Moses*. This indeed has a strong taint of Jewish Leaven in't; which they that plead so zealously for the *Jus Divinum* of Tythes, and Holiness of Places, because *Moses* once put off his shoes, may do well to advise upon; the Nonconformists for ought I know are little concern'd in't. We grant that there is no necessity that the Temporal Sanction even of the *Moral Law* it self, should be the same under the Gospel, that it was under the *Administration of Moses*: That the Violators of the *Lords days* Holy Rest should be stoned, as the infringer of the *Sabbath* was of old; the Adulterers should be punish'd with Death,

or a Blasphemer endure the same now which then was exacted. Law givers do consider the tempers and dispositions of their Subjects in these matters; we are no further concerned herein than to pray, that they who moderate the Affairs of the Empires of this World, may be directed with Wisdom from above, may order all things in a subserviency to his glory by whom they Reign, and the publick peace, welfare and prosperity.

3. A Third instance is in Excommunication. Which (*says he*) they hold must be by a Synod or Presbytery, and the Prince as well as the People must be subject to the Sentence. Here are several Questions that invite our serious debate; as 1. What is the proper Seat of the power of Excommunication? 2. Who are the proper Objects of this Power? 3. Whether to fix the power of Excommunication be a Judaical Principle? And 4. Whether a Prince may come under the Edge of that Sword? Any one of which would require more room than I have allotted my self to turn in: What I shall say is this.

1. That the Synod or Presbytery are the Seat of Excommunication, carries as fair proof at least, as the Chancellor who is a Layman, or at best a Deacon of no Scripture Institution, can show for himself by Divine Right.

2. That all scandalous persons are lyable to that Censure, is true in the general; but that it may not be executed upon a Supreme Magistrate, arises from peculiar Maxims of Government; upon which the safety of a Kingdom depends: I know not that this is a Principle of the N. C. for my part I disown it.

3. That this was a Jewish Principle to excommunicate their Kings, I do not certainly know, nor dare positively determine: That they received any such standing Law from God, I do not find: That a High-Priest did once actually separate a King upon the score of his Leprosie, we read; and that others perhaps would not do as much if a Prince pleased not their Humours, we have no security: I should shrewdly suspect their Inclinations this way; whoever they were, that inserted this Doctrine into our Bibles: which we find in the Contents of the 149. Psalm. The Prophet exhorteth to praise God for that power he hath given to the Church to Rule the Consciences of Men: Which they refer to vers. 5. and the following. Let the Saints be joyfull in Glory: let them sing aloud upon their Beds. Let the high Praises of God be in their Mouth, and a two-edged Sword in their Hand: To execute vengeance upon the Hea-

then, and punishments upon the People : To bind their Kings with Chains, and their Nobles with Fetters of Iron. If this be the Power God has given the Church over the Consciences of Men, the Nonconformists did not insert it, and wish it may be expunged from the Bible.

4. He must by no means omit their Superstitions about the *Lords-day* : which must be called a *Sabbath* too, though such Name is nowhere given it, either in the New Testament, or any Ancient Writer that he knows of. Here are two Branches, the first *de Nomine*, the second *de Re*.

1. *De Nomine* : whether the *Lords-day* may be called a *Sabbath*, especially with the usual Epithete, *The Christian Sabbath* ? That it must be so called (as he falsifies) the N. C. assert not : That it may be so called, they are willing to enter a sober discourse with him when he is at leisure. A *Sabbath* in general, signifies no more than a *Day of Rest*. And he that owns the day may be called the *Lords-day*, must needs own it to be a *resting day*, and by consequence a *Sabbath-day* ; and the greatest fault herein is, that it's good in *English*, but stark naught in *Hebrew*. Nay ther's somewhat more will follow, This day of which we speak, is called the *Lords-day*, Rev. 1. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lords-day*. And the reason of the Appellation is this, because the Lord *Jesus* has a special interest and propriety in that day : As the great standing-Ordinance of the Gospel is called the *Lords Supper*, 1 Cor. 11, because it was instituted by Him, and was to be devoted to *Communion with him* ; so this day is called the *Lords-day*, because it was determin'd by him, and ought to be dedicated to him in his Service and Worship, that we may approve our selves eminently the *Lords Servants*, upon that day which is eminently the *Lords-day*. And if so, it will challenge the Title, not only of a *day of Rest*, but *Holy Rest* : And if men were not swarming full of Crotchets and Idle Whimsies, and Superstitious Dotages, they would never scruple to call that a *Holy Sabbath-day*, which they must confess a *Holy resting day*.

But how came this precise qualm over our Enquirers heart, that he is so Skittish at the word *Sabbath*, because forsooth it's not given the Day in the New Testament ? They have some singular privilege and prerogative surely, that may institute what Officers, what Offices they please, though neither Name nor Thing be found there, nor print nor mark of the least Foot-step, when the poor Nonconformists may not use indifferently an innocent word, which signifies no more in it self, than he will acknowledg to be found there.

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But how is this a point of Judaism? or how one of the nearer causes of separation? If it be, we may confidently say we have imbibed both from the Liturgy of the Church, which teaches the Minister to rehearse the fourth Commandment. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy;* and then enjoins us all to pray *Lord have mercy upon us, and encline our hearts to keep this Law.* But if this Word, this Doctrine, be of so pernicious a contagion, as to infect us with Judaism and Nonconformity, we have need of another *miserere mei Deus!* for keeping it.

That this name Sabbath, applied to the Christian Holy-day of Rest, is found in *Ancient Writers*, I shall not urge. *Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes.* Let every one of us keep the Sabbath Spiritually, not in bodily ease, (only) but in the study of the Law. Nor the Author of the *Sermons de Tempore*, (none of *Austins*. for any mans word will go further than his) for so we rightly sanctifie the Lords Sabbath, as the Lord hath said, *In it thou shalt do no manner of work;* but this I shall say, that he that denies it to be a Day of Holy Rest, it s no great matter what he calls it. And he that owns it such, must be most ridiculously obstinate, that denies it may properly be so called.

2. We come to the dispute *De Re.* And first he charges the N. C. That the Lords day amongst them, must have all the Nicety of Observation that the Jewish Sabbath had: and which is yet worse, such Observation thereof is made one of the principal parts of Religion.

What the Nonconformists hold and practice in this point, is so well known from their Writings and conversations, that no man can possibly slander them, but he must do it against his Conscience; which had the Enquirer attended to, it would have taught him other Language: what was the practice of the best Christians who lived up in any good measure to the Holiness of their Profession, that is the practice of the Nonconformist; and wherein they come short, have cause to be humbled in the sight of God: If any Individuals have added any Jewish Austerities, or invented any superstitious severities to make the day a Legal Yoke, we Wish they may be no more favourably dealt with, than those other additions that have been made to Religion.

For the publick Service of the day, I shall give the Reader a piece of *Clemens Rom. Lib. 2. cap. 59.* 'On the Lords-day frequent more carefully the Temple of the Lord, that ye may praise God who made all things by Jesus Christ; whom he sent unto us, and suffered him to dye for us, and raised him from the dead; for what

' can excuse him with God, who meets not to hear the saving Word  
' of God concerning the Resurrection? On which day, we pray  
' thrice, standing, remembering him who after three days rose again.

For the private observation of the day, the same Author *lib. 4. cap. 9.* thus ' We admonish you, Brethren and Fellow Servants,  
' that you fly vain words and filthiness, pleasant jests, &c: for  
' on the Lords days, which are our days of Rejoicings, we do  
' not permit you to do or speak any thing not savoury; for the  
' Scripture saith, serve the Lord with fear.

St. Hierom commends the Egyptian Monks, that they designed  
the Lords days wholly to Prayer, and reading the Holy Scriptures. The  
Author of the Sermons *De tempore.* ' This day is called the Lords  
' day, that in it abstaining from all earthly works and wordly  
' pleasures, we should only give our selves to the service of the  
' Lord: Let us therefore, Brethren, observe the Lords day, and  
' sanctifie it, as it was commanded them of old concerning the  
' Sabbath. If our Enquirer had the trimming up of this Author, he  
had dressed him up for a Marane, a baptized Jew. *Chrysost. on Gen. 2.*  
' God from the beginning did insinuate unto us this instruction,  
' to set apart, and separate one whole day in the Circle of every  
' Week, for spiritual exercises; And in *Homil. 4. on Math.* Let us  
' prescribe this as an unmovable Law to our selves, to our Wives  
' and Children, to set aside one day of the Week, and that wholly  
' to hearing, and laying up of things heard. *Isidore Hispalensis:*  
' The Apostles therefore ordained the Lords-day to be kept with  
' Religious Solemnities, because in it our Redeemer rose from  
' the Dead, which was therefore called the Lords-day, that rest-  
' ing on the same from all Earthly acts and temptations of the  
' World, we might intend Gods holy Worship, giving this day due  
' Honour for the hope of the Resurrection we have therein.

But because our inquirer admires the Piety of former Ages in  
this our Britain, I shall come a little home and see what were the  
publick Constitutions of our own Nation. *Leg. Inæ. cap. 3. An. 692.*  
*si servus operetur die dominicâ per præceptum domini sui, sit liber;*  
*& Dominus emendet 308. ad Witam: si servus sine testimonio Domi-*  
*ni sui operetur, Corium perdat, (i. e. vapulet) si liber operetur isso die,*  
*sine jussu Domini sui, perdat libertatem: If a Servant work on the*  
*Lords day at his Masters Command, let him be free, and his Master be*  
*fined thirty shillings. If a Servant without his Masters Order do any*  
*work, let him be whipped, c. 12. If a freed man work on that day with-*

out the Command of his Master, let him lose his Freedom  
*Concil. Bergham, cap. 10. An. 697. ' Si in vespera præcedente  
 ' Diem solis, post quam sol occubuit, aut in vespera præcedente  
 ' Diem Lunæ, post occasum solis, servus ex mandato Domini sui  
 ' opus aliquod servile egerit, Dominus factum octaginta solidis  
 ' Luito. If a Servant on the Evening before Sunday, after Sun set,  
 or on the Evening before Monday, after Sun-set, shall do any servile  
 work by order of his Master, let his Master pay for his fault four  
 pounds, c. 11. If a Servant on these days shall travel, let him pay to  
 his Master six shillings, or be whipped, c. 12. If a Free-man be guilty  
 of the same offence, let him be liable to the Pillory.*

Excerpt. Eggb. Archiepiscopi Eborac An. Chr. 750. c. 36. ' God  
 ' the Creatour of all things made man on the sixth day, and upon  
 ' the Sabbath he rested from all his Labours, and sanctified the  
 ' Sabb. th for the future signification of the sufferings of Christ, and  
 ' his rest in the Grave; He did not rest because he was weary;  
 ' who made all things without Labour, whose Omnipotency can-  
 ' not be wearied; and he so rested from his Labours, that he made  
 ' no other Creatures than he made before: He made no other  
 ' Creatures afterwards; but whatsoever he made, he makes them  
 ' every year, to the end of all time: He createth Men in their  
 ' souls and bodies, living Creatures and Beasts without souls. The  
 ' The Soul of man is given by God, and he renews his Creatures,  
 ' as Christ saith in the Gospel, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I*  
 ' *work*: Christ suffered for us in the sixth age of the World, and on  
 ' the sixth day, and reformed lost man by his sufferings, and the  
 ' Miracles which he wrought. He rested in the Sepulchre on the  
 ' Sabbath-day and sanctified the Lords-day by his Resurrection;  
 ' for the Lords-day, is the first day of the new World, and the day  
 ' of the Resurrection of Christ; therefore it is *Holy*, and we ought  
 ' to be his, spiritually keeping a *Sabbath-day*, *Sabbatum* *Sabbatizantes*.

*Leg. Presbyt. Northumbr. ' Mercaturam in Die solis exercere,  
 ' & Curias alicubi celebrare prohibemus, opus etiam quodlibet,  
 ' & omnimodam ventionem, sive in plaustris, sive in equis, sive in  
 ' aliis oneribus ferendis, Qui contra hoc deliquerit solvat, --We  
 forbid any to Trade or keep open Courts on the Sunday, and also all o-  
 ther work whatsoever, and all manner of Carriages, whether with Carts  
 or Horses, or in bearing any other burdens: He that transgresses this  
 Degree shall pay--' nisi sit viator necessitate compulsus, vel ob cibi*

' inopiam, aut ex causa evitandi inimicos. *Except he be a Traveller  
' compelled by necessity, either by the want of Food, or to avoid the  
Enemies. Reader, whether this be Judaism or no, I shall leave to  
thy more sedate Judgment; but it is a mighty strong temptation  
rather to be one of those old Jews, than one of the new Christians,  
Leg. Eccles. Canut. An. Christi. 1032. ' Die quidem Dominico,  
' mercata concelebrati, Populi conventus Agi, (nisi flagitante  
' necessitate) planissime veramus. Ipso Die sacrosancto, præterea  
' à venationibus. & opere terreno prorsus omni, Quisque abstinere  
' to. *We do absolutely forbid all Markets, and Assemblies of the  
People to be kept on the Lords-day. (except in case of urgent necessity)  
and moreover, Let every one refrain from Hunting, and from all o-  
ther earthly business upon that sacred day.**

A little now for diversion let us step over the Seas, and look  
into the temper of the times, under the Reign of Charles the Great.  
' Statuimus secundum quod Dominus in lege præcepit, ut Opera  
' Servilia diebus Dominicis non Agantur, sicut, & bonæ memoriæ  
' Genitor meus (Pipinus) in suis Synodâlibus edictis mandavit, i.  
' e. Quod nec viri Ruralia opera exerceant nec in vinea colendâ,  
' nec in campo Arando, vel sænum secando vel sepem ponendô.  
' vel in sylvis stirpare, vel arbores cædere, vel in Petris laborare;  
' nec domus construere, nec hortum laborent, nec ad placita con-  
' veniant, nec venationem exerceant: *We ordain, as also the Lord  
hath commanded in the Law, that no servile works be done on the Lords  
day. As also our Father of happy memory in his Synodal Edicts hath  
commanded, that is to say That men neither exercise the labours of their  
Farms, neither in dressing Vineyards, nor in Plowing, nor in mowing  
Grass, or in laying a Hedge, or to grub up, or cut down Trees, or to la-  
bour in Quarries or to build a House, or to order a Garden. or to hold  
Pleas, or to practice Hunting. Item fœminæ opera Textilia non  
' exerceant, nec Capillent; vestitus non consuunt, vel Acupictile  
' faciant, nec lanam Cæpere, nec linum battere, nec publicè vesti-  
' menta lavare, nec verveces tondere habeant licitum ut omnino no-  
' dis. Honor & Requies diei Dominicæ servetur. Let not Women  
practice Weaving; let them not take pains about their Hair, nor mend  
their Cloaths nor work Needle-work or Point, nor card Wool nor Hackle  
Flax nor wash Cloaths openly, nor shear sheep, that the Honour and Rest  
of the Lords-day may by all means be secure. Const. Carol. M. fol. 32,  
It will be time now to draw to a conclusion, when I have noted:*

§. 1. It looks like a piece of great dissimulation to bait Dissen-  
ters like Jews, for the indifferent use of the word Sabbath, because

not



not found in the *New Testament*, and at the same time to worry them with Barking words and biting penalties, for not practicing upon that *very day Humane Ceremonies*, which (name and thing) are perfectly strangers to the *New Testament*.

§. 2. It seems so far from a *next cause* of Nonconformity, Religiously to observe the *Lords-day*, that it were rather an Allurement to conformity, when we observe the Church so strictly commands her Children in the Rubrick: *after every Commandment, kneeling to ask God mercy for their transgression of the same*. And if the Dissenters were of this *Enquirers* principles, they must be obliged to be Nonconformists, till the Liturgy in that particular should be Reformed.

§. 3. It's highly disingenuous to upbraid them with the less strictness of some of the Reformed Churches abroad in this one point, when they are not allow'd to vouch their principles and practices in *twenty others*.

§. 4. It deserves a *most serious Enquiry*, whether any Church did long maintain any splendour of *Practical Religion*, that grew remiss and loose in the Conscientious Observation of the *Lords-day*.

§. 5. Whether the strict and Religious attendance to the worship of God on that Day, be a cause of Nonconformity or no, is uncertain; but this is certain, that the *loose and formal* observation of it, has been a direct and immediate cause of that *Atheism* and *Prophaness*, and perhaps of *those judgments* which have broken in upon us.

§. 6. It ought to be matter of serious Humiliation and Repentance both to the Conformists and Nonconformists, and between them both, they have suffered Piety to decline in their hands, by a visible degeneracy from the strictness of former time, in *sanctifying Gods name on his Holy-day*.

§. 7. It ought to be considered, That they who of late times have written against the *Divine Right* of that day, have yet spoken so honourably of, and pleaded for the *Holy use of the day*, as will justify greater Reverence to the day, than I fear the Nonconformists are guilty of. The Learned *Brerewood* Tract. 1. p. 4-7. 'I confess It is meet that Christians should on the *Lords-day* abandon all worldly affairs, and dedicate it wholly to the Honour of God. *The B. of Ely.* p. 253. Devout Christians, who are so piously affected, as that on the *Lords-days*, and other *Holy-days*, they do resolve to retire, and sequester themselves from secular business, and ordinary pleasures and delights, to the end they may more

more freely attend the service of Christ and apply their minds to spiritual and Heavenly Meditations, are to be commended and encouraged; for the doing thereof is a work of Grace and Godliness, and acceptable to God.

§ 8. It would be enquired, whether it have not a greater Tincture of Judaism, to enjoin *other days for Holy days*, which have *no footing* in Gods word, than to spend the Lords day in pursuit of those things which concern our Everlasting peace, which is clearly warranted thereby. B. Andrews urges this against Trask. The Apostles kept their meetings on that day; on that day they were συναγωγαί i. e. held their sacred Synaxes, their solemn Assemblies, to preach, to pray, to celebrate the Lords Supper, δεσπνν κυριακν ἐν ἡμέρα κυριακῇ, The Lords Supper, on the Lords day; for these two words only, the day and the Supper, have the Epithere of κυριακν in the Scripture, to shew that its alike in both.

c. A fifth instance of their Judaical Principle is *their Doctrine of absolute Predestination*.

This Doctrine has perplexed the Enquirer beyond measure; he would mention it every where *willingly*. but knows not where to mention it *pertinently*: It was lately one of the *Pretended*, or *Apo-cryphal*, and now its become a *Real and Canonical*, nay a *near and immediate cause*, or at least the *just sixth part of a cause of separation*.

I shall for once suppose, that all the Nonconformists are *sublapsarians*: Now let him show me that Article or Doctrine to which this Church requires subscription, relating to the decrees of God, to which a *Sublapsarian* cannot freely subscribe.

The 17 Art<sup>th</sup> of the Church speaks without question her sence in the matter: 'Predestination to life, is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby before the foundations of the World was laid, he hath constantly decreed by his Council secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation.

It were more for this Gentlemans comfort and credit, to write a *serious and Compassionate Enquiry into the pretended and real, the remote and near causes of his own conformity to that Doctrine which so pleasantly derides*; and with what Engines, Machines, Screws and Pulleys he could hale his Conscience to a Subscription: The old device was good. *Lingua juratus sum, mente juravi nihil*: It's

a happy freedom of Spirit, a blessed enlargement of mind to *sub-*  
*scribe any thing, and believe nothing.*

Two things there are which ought to have been cleared ; first,  
 that the Doctrine of Predestination is a *Jewish Principle*; secondly,  
 that it's a cause, or a *Piece of a cause of Nonconformity.*

For the former he makes it out thus : ' He that seeks the source  
 ' of so odd an Opinion can in my mind pitch no where more Pro-  
 ' bably, than upon the absolute Decree of God to favour the Po-  
 ' sterity of *Abraham* for his sake : Alas poor Man ! And had the  
 Church of *England* (thinks he) no more wit, than to talk of an  
*everlasting purpose before the foundation of the World, of a constant De-*  
*creed to deliver from curse and damnation some that he had chosen out*  
*of mankind, and bring them to Everlasting Salvation, from such a*  
 Ridiculous ground ? But the difficulty was, how to make this a  
 piece of Judaism ; and when Men set themselves *insuperable,*  
*Task,* they must rub through them *as they are able.*

The second will be more difficult : For many Conformists  
 have been, and are *Sublapsarians*, and some Nonconformists *Subter-*  
*Sublapsarians* ; And the *Enquirer* told us, p. 7. ' That the Articles  
 ' of the Doctrine of our Church do with such admirable pru-  
 ' dence and wariness handle these Points, (*the five Points*) as if par-  
 ' ticular respect was had to these Men, and care taken that they  
 ' might *Abundare sensu suo.* So necessary it was our Author should  
 confute his own contradictory Cavils !

Well ! Whether this Church, the *Jewish Church*, the Noncon-  
 formists, or any, or all, or none of them be of this opinion, yet it  
 is a most monstrous one ! For (says he) ' The Holy Scripture has of-  
 ' ren assured us, that at the great day God will judg the World in  
 ' Righteousness ; and that without respect of Persons, he will ren-  
 ' der to every one according to his works. Wonderfull ! And  
 are the *Sublapsarians* all this while to seek, *how God may be righte-*  
*ous in the great Day, if he Decreed to give grace to some Men*  
*which he never owed them, and left others to perish under the Fruits*  
*of their own Apostacy and unbelief ?*

6. The last Instance is *their superstitious observation and interpre-*  
*tation of Prodigies.*

The works of God are all admirable, those of Creation *Glorious,*  
 those of Providence *Mysterious* ; we have reason to revere his  
*Greatness* in all that he doth them ; his *Wisdom* in all, in that he can ;  
 his *Goodness*, in that he will make them Bow to subserve his own  
 Councils, and Purposes, in working together for good in them that.

leues.

*Love him.* To fetch our Creed from that Book of Providence we allow not, it's well if we can make Gods use of them, to awaken a sleepy world to Repentance.

The greatest Prodigy that has startled me of late, has been a story that many tell us, That in several places in the Nation ' the Graves have been seen to open and many old Hereticks to have: ' ris'n, and walk'd, and talk'd, and Preach'd, and Printed Books: whom we verily believed to have been as dead and rotten as their Heresies. Thus I remember *Lirinenfis* cal's *Cal'stus*, *Prodigiosum Pelagij Discipulum*, That *Prodigious Scholar* of Pelagius: Something was useful to have been said about Prodigies, and it must come in here, or no where, and therefore let it pass for a *Jewish* Opinion, and a sixth part of one whole cause of Nonconformity.

[3] He reckons *Prejudice* amongst the causes of our distractions, and let it pass for a third: There is a sound fence, in which our *Enquirers* notions may be very true, could we be but so happy as to hit on't.

*Tertullian* complained sadly of those insuperable prejudices against the Christian Religion, under which they all groaned. *Non scelus aliquod in causa est, sed Nomen.* It was the Name of a Christian that was their greatest Crime. *Bonus Vir* Cajus Sejus *tantum quod Christianus.* A poor Woman amongst the Ignorant Devoto's of Rome, was instructed by her ghostly Father, that the *Hugonots* were all Monsters: It hapned that one of her Neighbours spying a Protestant passing by, told her, That *Man is a Hugonot*: It's impossible replied she, *He looks as like a Man as ever I saw one in my life.* Thus are Dissenters by prejudice and partiality sentenced and executed in the peremptory Judgments of many, before their cause is heard, or they admitted to a fair Defence and Tryal.

I shall therefore spare my common place-Book, and reserve my stores for more important occasions; and at present borrow our *Enquirers* more refined Collections (for they will serve any Mans turn) to evince, that prejudice is a cause, not why there are so many Nonconformists, but that there are no more.

\* This *Prejudice* alone was able to Seal up the Eyes of the Gentile World against the Sun of Righteousness, when he shone upon them in his brightest Glory; and to confirm them in their blind Idolatries, when the God that made Heaven and Earth gave the fullest discoveries that it was fit for mankind to expect.

\* Upon the account of this, the *Jews* rejected that *Messias*, they had so long expected, and gloried in before he came, though he exactly

' exactly answered all the Characters of Time, Place, Lineage, Doctrine and Miracles, that their own Writings had described him by.

No wonder then if the Nonconformists suffer under Prejudice amongst those that have not only seen their Doctrine stigmatized with the odious Marks of Judaism, their Churches with the brand of Schism, their Persons with Treason and Rebellion, but also had been formed into a Combination against them; and so had both their Consciences and worldly Interest engaged against them and it.

' For few have the generosity and strength of mind to bear up against the Torrent of Times, or confidence enough to oppose the Impetuoufness of common Vogue, or prevailing Opinion. There are not many that have the sagacity to discern the true Images of things, through those thick Mists that cunning Politicians cast about them. It's very ordinary to take the Condemnation of any Person or party for a sufficient proof of the Accusation, and to think the Indictment Proved. It was enough both with the Jews and Gentiles against our Saviour, that he was condemned as a Malefactor: the Ignominy of his Cross was a greater Argument against him with the Generality, than the excellency of his Doctrine, or evidence of his Miracles was for him.

The Arguments against Nonconformity were not weighed, but numbered: An Impeachment of Accumulative Disorder, Schism, Faction, Judaism. Popular Rashness, and Disobedience to Magistrates, was formed against them, and still there was more in the Conclusion than could be made out by the Premises; and in the Sum Total, than in the Particulars of which it consisted; for though no Point of all these could be proved against their Doctrine, Worship or Discipline, yet they must be so upon the whole, This being agreed, the cry is then, Crucifie! Destroy it Root and Branch.

To all which add, that it was the corrupt interest of some to deceive others into an ill Opinion of the Reformation, partly as being enraged that any sparks of Primitive Purity should be left unquenched, which might burn up their vast hopes they had conceived of dividing the spoil amongst themselves: Partly being conscious to themselves, that by Reason of their no more than Declamatory, Vulgar and Puerile Abilities improved from Apothegms and Proverbial Sentences, they could not be fit to fill any considerable place in a Church Reformed according to the Scriptures; nor yet to content themselves with a private station in a persecuted Society; they therefore

therefore chose to fall in, where they might be entertained as *useful Tools*, and rewarded for their singular Talents of Reviling.

*And when it is once come to that pass.* That by this Craft we get our Living, (one, two, or three) *like the Silver-smiths of Ephesus*, no wonder if the *Apostolical Doctrine and Government* be cried down, and the Great Diana of Pauls conformity cried up sooner than built. The sum is this ; some men are blindly led by their Education, and care taken that they never come to a view of the Dissenters principles ; others by Interest, forced to espouse that Religion that has the fairest Dowry ; A third sort, by their Reputation, that they may not seem to have been in an Error ; and when all these causes shall (as they too frequently do) happily concur, such an associated and complicated Temptation, will form a prejudice strong enough to oppose the clearest Demonstrations, and to stir up so much rancour and malignity, as shall incessantly persecute misrepresented Truth,

*I will add one word from the Learned Author of Orig. Sacr. and conclude.* It cannot be conceived, That many out of affectation of Novelty, should declare themselves Christians in the Primitive times, when so great hazards were run upon in the professing of it : Few soft spirited men, and lovers of their own ease, but would have found out some fine distinctions, and nice evasions, to have reconciled themselves to the publick Laws, and such things which the Primitive Christians so unanimously refused, when tending to Idolatry and Prophaneis.

An ordinary Judgment will soon determine, whether party may more plausibly complain of being pressed down with unreasonable prejudices. They that will appear in the *Quality of Dissenters*, must stem the violent Current of prevailing Example, inveterate Custom, whilst others have nothing to do but skulk away with the Tide, when it comes in, with the *Celeusma of Queen-bithe*, Westward hoe, *Lambeth hoe* ! Dissenters must storm the Turnpikes of reproach, poverty, and those more formidable ones of the displeasure of Friends, and wrath of Superiours, smoaking out in Imprisonment, or other penalties, besides the Ecclesiastical Charities of Excommunication : the rest have nothing more to do, but patiently and meekly submit to Preferments and Dignities ; and if they can but compass such a measure of self denial, as to renounce ruin and misery, and rise to such a height of contentment, as to be willing to enter upon ease and affluence, the worst is over, and their greatest prejudices conquered

4. *The last cause of the Distractions and ill Estate of this Church, is the*

the want of true Christian Zeal, and of a deep and serious sense of Piety. And the Enquirer wishes that it be not the greatest as well as the last. And so do I too! For the want of Zeal for Gods commands, makes us so scalding hot for Humane Constitutions. The want of such Zeal for the Authority of Christ as a King, makes us so bold to Invaade his Office. The want of Zeal for the Perfection of Scriptures, makes us so Zealous for unscriptural Traditions. The want of Zeal for the substance, makes us so Zealous for Ceremonial shadows. When all those Spirits, that Holy ardour of Soul, that flame of affection which ought to be expended in the love of God, and his Law, is evaporated in Airy speculations, contentions for, and impositions of new Inventions.

This Cause is plainly in the number of those, which like the Weathercock, conform to every gust of Wind, it is *Communis juris*, and therefore the first occupancy creates a Title.

What was it made the Primitive Church so unanimous, that it was not crumbled into parties, nor mouldered away in Divisions, nor quarrelled about opinions, nor separated one part from another, upon occasion of little scruples, but because the turbulent Spirit of Imposition was not yet raised, nor ambitious domineering over the Faith and Consciences of the brethren, had not yet got any considerable Head? It's true, there was a spice of this encroaching Humour found amongst the Judaizing Christians, who would needs obtrude their Ceremonies upon the gentile Converts, as necessary to Communion with the Church: but the divinely inspired Apostles were ready at hand to check the growing Evil, and vindicate the Church from the servitude of *beggerly Rudiments*. Its true, *Diotrephes* his fingers itched to be tampering; but the beloved Disciple that lay in his Masters Bosom, who was privy to his meek and gracious temper, and knew how displeasing such imperiousness was to him, gave an early and timely rebuke to attempts and essays of Prelatical arrogance; and indeed he could not but remember, and was concerned in it, how smartly Christ had snibbed *aspiring Church-men*.

That there was so much Tranquility therefore amongst the Primitive Christians; was not that they were without differing apprehensions; for mens parts were no more alike, nor their Educations more equal than now: But because there was a Spirit of Condescension to, and mutual forbearance one of another. The strong either in knowledge or authority, did not trample upon the weak; There was then some diversity of expressions, in which the Pastors of several Churches delivered themselves, (for there were neither Homilies:  
nor



nor Liturgies) yet they did not dispute themselves into parties, because they made not their own sentiments the Test of Orthodoxy, nor their private Faith the publick standard and measure, to which all Christians should be tyed to subscribe; They allowed a latitude in things not fundamental, nor had learned the modern Artifice of fettering Consciences in the Chains of *assent and consent*, to the Dogmas of a prevailing party.

In those days men were sincerely good and devout, and set their Hearts upon the main; the huge consequence and concern of which, easily prevailed with those Holy men, to over-look other *mens private Opinions*: They were intent upon that wherein the power of Godliness consisted, and upon which the Salvation of Souls depended; and so all that was secure, they were not so superstitiously concerned for Rituals, either to practice them, much less to impose them; They would not stake the Churches Peace against Ceremonies, and then play it away rather than not be Gamesters. They considered that they had all one God, one Faith, one Baptism, one Lord Jesus Christ; and never insisted upon one Posture, one Gesture, one Garment, one Ceremony: They Good men found enough to do to mortifie their Passions, to bear their Burdens of Afflictions and Persecution, to withstand the temptations of the Devil, and the contagion of evil examples; And had no strength to spare, nor superfluous time to waste, to Cull the Theory of Ceremonies, and practice new devices.

But when men grow cold and indifferent about great things, then they become fervent about the lesser; when they give over to mind a holy life and heavenly Conversation, then they grow fierce Disputants for, and rigid Exactors of the full Tale of Ceremonies. Thus when the Scribes and Pharisees became so violent for the necessity of washing hands, they little regarded the *cleansing of their Hearts*; They that will make things indifferent to become necessary, the next news you hear of them is, that they make things necessary to become indifferent: when men cease to study their own Hearts, they become very studious how to vex and torment other mens; for then they have both leisure and confidence enough to trample upon their inferiours. Then it shall be a greater sin for a Monk to lay aside his Cowle, than his Chastity: and to be a scrupulous Nonconformist to the Laws of Men, than a scandalous Nonconformist to the Laws of God:

In short (that I may say the same thing over again, which I have twenty times already said, and that I may convince the Reader

that

that I have read *Erasmus de Copia verborum*, as well as his famous piece of the *Art of Preaching*) Then, and not till then, do the little Appendices of Religion grow great and mighty matters in mens esteems when the Essentials, the great and weighty matters, are become little and inconsiderable; which I had little need to have mentioned, but for the sake of those Elegant and Modish words, Appendices and Essentials, which in an Eloquent Oration ought not to have been forgotten. -- *Dixi!*

That there are Distractions in the Nation, Divisions amongst Christian Brethren, and a separation from the present Church of England in various degrees, is evident; The Industry of our Enquirer in Tracing out the Causes of them, has been very commendable, though his success has not been answerable. Had he pleased to approve himself a skilful and impartial, as well as a serious Enquirer, he had certainly directed us to one cause more, which for want of Ariadnes Thred, in the Anfractuious windings of this Labyrinth, he has quite lost himself, and his Travels. Honest *Gerfon* of old has notified it to the non-observing World, and from him I shall recommend it to the Reader.

There can be (saith he) no General Reformation without the Abolitions of sundry Canons and Statutes, which neither are, nor reasonably can be observed in these times, which do nothing but ensnare the Consciences of men to their endless Perdition: no tongue is able to express what evil, what danger and confusion, the neglect and contempt of the Holy Scripture, (which doubtless is sufficient for the Government of the Church, else Christ had been an imperfect Law-giver) and the following of Humane Inventions, hath brought into the Church, *Serm. in die circ. part 1.* 'Tis that which has ever been lamented, and by all moderate persons complained of, That unnecessary Impositions, have been made the indispensible conditions of Church Communion, without precept or precedent from the word of God.

To this cause had he reduced all our divisions; he said more in those few plain words, than in all those well cougth periods where-with he has adorned his Discourse, and darkened Counsel. As the matter of Law arises out of the matter of Fact, so the Justice of the Nonconformists Cause, appears from the terms that are put upon them in order to Communion; If the terms be unjust, it will justify their cause; If they have sinfully managed their cause, its goodness will not justify their Persons; what Dissenters usually

insist upon for their Justification, I shall reduce to these Heads.

S. 1. They plead, that some things are imposed upon their Faith, tendered to Subscription, as Articles of Faith, which are either false; or at best, they have not yet been so happy as to discover the truth of them: In *Art. 20.* They are required to subscribe this Doctrine, *The Church hath power to Decree Rites and Ceremonies*; which clause of the Article, as we fear, it has been by some indirect means shuffled into the Article, it not being found in the Authentick Articles of *Edward 6.* so it proves also, that the terms of Communion have been enlarged since the first times of the Reformation.

They object also against that Doctrine in the *Rubrick*; That 'it is certain from the word of God, That Children Baptized, and dying before the Commission of actual sins, are undoubtedly saved. The Scripture, the Protestant Churches, nor any sound Reason, have yet given them any tolerable satisfaction of the Truth of the Doctrine about the *Opus operatum*, of Sacraments: That Doctrine laid down in the Catechism, That Children do perform Faith and Repentance by their sureties, is also as great a stumbling to our Faith, and we cannot get over it, How the Adult should believe and repent for Minors, or Infants believe and Repent by Proxie, I omit many others.

S. 2. They plead, that they are not satisfied in the use of any Mystical Ceremonies in Gods worship; and particularly they judge the use of the *Cross in Baptism* to be sinful: A Sacrament of Divine Institution according to the Definition of the Church in her Catechism, 'is an outward and visible sign, of an inward and invisible Grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof: where we have, 1. *The matter of 2 Sacrament, An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.* 2. *The Author of a Divine Sacrament, Christ himself.* 3. *The End of it: to be a means to convey the thing signified, and a pledge to assure us of it.* Hence its evident, that its simply impossible that any Church should institute a Divine Sacrament, because they cannot give a causality to those Graces it is instituted to signify: never theless its possible for Men to institute humane Sacraments; which shall have the Matter of a Sacrament, that is, *an outward Visible sign of an inward Spiritual Grace*; and they may pretend to ascribe an effect to it also *to stir up, to excite, or encrease Grace and Devotion*: And yet because it

wants

wants the right efficient cause, its no *lawful Sacrament*, though it be an *Humane Sacrament*; Such an institution (say they) is the *Sign of the Cross*. 'An outward Visible Sign of an inward Spiritual Grace Ordained by Men as a means to effect whatever Man can work by his Ordinance. Here is the matter without Divine Signature, which is the thing they condemn it for.

3. They plead, that since Communion with the Church is suspended and denyed but upon such Terms as take away Christian Liberty in part and by consequence leave all the rest at Mercy; they dare not accept of Communion upon those terms: There are some things which God has in the general left free and indifferent, to do or not do; yet at some times, and in some cases it may be my great sin if I should do some of them, as when it would wound the Conscience, and destroy the Soul of a weak Christian: If now I shall engage my self to the Church, that I will never omit such an indifferent thing; and the Soul of that weak Christian should call, to me to omit it, I have tyed my hands by engagement, I cannot help him, though it would save his or a thousand Souls out of Hell, because I have given away my freedom to the Church.

4. They plead, that they ought not to hazard their Souls in one Congregation, if they may more hopefully secure them in another; for that their Souls are their greatest concernment in this World and in the next: Now say they, ther's no Question but Men Preach such as they Print with publick allowance; and therefore they ought to provide better for their Souls elsewhere: Especially they say, That the Doctrine of Justification is *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiae*, an Article with which the Church falls or stands: this Article say they, in the Parish where we live is quite demolish'd by the Doctrine of *Justification by Works*; we are bound therefore to provide for our safety and depart; and when we are once out, we will advise upon another Church, not which is tolerable, but which is eligible, and in all things nearest the Word.

5. They plead, that there's no obligation upon them to own the Churches Power to impose new terms of Communion, unless the Church can prove her Power from Christ: Its not for them to disprove it; it lies upon her to prove it, and to prove it substantially too, or else it will be hard to prove it their duty to own it.

6. They say, the World is pesterd with Disputes about worship, about Religion; and therefore since all cannot be in the right, they are willing to go the safest way, and worship God according,

to his Word : If the things disputed be lawful to be done, let 'em be so ; they are sure its lawful let 'em alone, and they think ther's no great hazard in keeping to Scripture Rule, nor can believe that Christ will send any to Hell, because they did not worship God in an External Mode, more neat and spruce than God commanded.

7. They pretend, that the things imposed are *parts of worship*, which none can Create but God, nor will God accept of any but such as are of his own Creating ; and whether they be *Integral or Essential Parts* they do not know, but in the worship of God they find them standing upon even ground with those that are *certainly Divine*, or at least as high as Man can lift them.

8. They do not find that God ever commanded the things imposed, either in general, in special, or their singulars ; If God has commanded a Duty to be done, the Church must find a place to do it in ; but though the Church must find a place for the Duty, a time for the Duty, she may not find *new Duty* for the time and place.

9. They are the more cautious of all Ceremonies, because the old Church of *England*, in her *Homilies* Serm. 3. *Of good Works* tells us : ' That such hath been the corrupt inclination of Man, superstitiously given to make new Honouring of God of his own Head, and then to have more Affection and Devotion to keep that, than to search out Gods Holy Commandments, and do them.

10. They say, they have read over all the Books that have been written in justification of those things, and they find their Arguments so weak, their Reasons so futile, that setting aside Rhetorick and Railing, ther's nothing in them, but what had been either answered by others, or is contradicted by themselves, which hardens them in their Errour, who are gone astray into the right way.

11. They say, it's their duty to endeavour a reformation according to the Word, which if others will not, they cannot help it, and hope they will not be angry with the willing.

## PART II.

## CHAP. I.

*The several ways for prevention of Church-Divisions mentioned by the Enquirer, considered. The Papal Methods, 1. Keeping the People in Ignorance. 2. An infallible Judge. 3. Accomodating Religion to the Lusts of Men. Three other ways mentioned by the Enquirer, 1. Toleration. 2. Comprehension. 3. Instruction.*

AS that Person will highly merit of this present Age, whose discerning eye shall discover, and his charity propound to the world such rational expedients as may amicably compose our present differences, upon terms comporting with the Conscientious principles of the contending parties; so our fears of the success are justly greatened by the frequent disappointment of our hopes; confident Pretenders posting up their Bills in every Corner, promising nothing less than miracles, but performing nothing more than pretences.

It is some encouragement to expect more than a Palliate Cure from this undertaker, to see him fall to his business so like an Artist: 'It cannot be hoped (*says he*) that where the business is Religion, and the concern Eternal life, that men should incuriously swallow every thing without moving any Question, or stirring any Debate. To which I subjoyn, Nor can it be expected that when they have moved the Question about the important concerns of Eternity, they should acquiesce in their own Question, without a satisfactory Answer, like that Governour who scorned to surrender before a Gun was shot off, but then thought it enough for his credit to Capitulate.

Most men swallow their Religion, as the Infant does its Pap, which has no other previous chewing, than what the Nurse gives it; and are driven into profession just like a flock of Geese, with no greater difficulty, than holding over their Heads the Ceremony of a Long Pole. And I will add further, that as this is *not to be hoped* from all; so neither is it desirable in any, that they should cease to be rational Creatures, before they become Christians.

The *Enquirer* has curiously and carefully searched all the Dispensatories, and out of those stores, promises us the choicest Medicines that may fit the Patients Case, and seem most practicable: And we cannot pray for a Physician better qualified, than one who is Master of many Remedies, and of a judgment to chuse out those which are agreeable.

The Church of *Rome* has been an old Empirick: so noted a Quack, for a desperate Cure in a desperate Case, that the greatest civility we can allow her here, is that which we commonly give your Mountebanks, lend them a hearing, and do as we see Cause.

She glories indeed in her Unity and Peace, and it might invite a modest curiosity to desire a sight of that Sympathetical Powder which has effected such wonders: And to satisfy you in one word, it's nothing but the *Jesuits Powder*, or a Great nothing in a Juglers Box.

1. Her first prescription is Prophylactick, by way of prevention: the best of Remedies (no doubt), since it's more desirable not to have needed, than having so, to have obtained the help of *Æsculapius*. And it is nothing more than this plain, cheap, and easie Recipe, That the people be kept in profound ignorance. Thus when the *Philistines* had put our *Sampsons* eyes, they knew he would make a stout Mill horse: Thus when the Empress *Irene* had pluckt out her *Sons* eyes who could see, she found it easie to set up Images which have eyes and see not. But our *Enquirer* looks upon this prescription as too strong a *Narcotic*, that it will not down in England, though it has done great feats in *Italy* and *Spain*; and the Uniformity of those Nations, is an unquestionable Certificate to avouch its excellency. And it's to be feared at present it will not: for some Learned Men are very confident, that our own English simples are more connatural to English Bodies, than the exotick Druggs of *Pontus*; and that we have the true *Dittamnium* growing in our own Gardens, had we but skill to use and apply it.

But we ever doted upon foreign Novelties, and prize nothing that liberal nature has bestowed on us: King *Lucius*, the glory of our Island, and the whole world, who first submitted his Crown of Gold to one of *Thorns*, and laid his Scepter at the foot of him who bore a Reed, not well instructed in the Riches of his own Dominions, must needs send to *Rome* for advice; *Eleutherius*, good Man, who had not yet learnt how to make all Thrones depend



pend upon his *Insallible Chair*, sends him this Answer, ' That there were already in Britain, the Old and the New Testament, ' out of which, by the Council of his Kingdom, he might take a ' Law to Govern it. Did England know its own strength, it's so well furnisht at home, that it might spare its Travels, and never cross the Seas, or climb the *Alpes* to seek new Models of Religion; The *Holy Scriptures* being (as *Lirinenfis* well says) *perfect, and abundantly sufficient for all things, yea and more than sufficient*. And on this account too there would be less need of Trade and Navigation.

Two Reasons there are why our *Enquirer* thinks this Papal Dose of Ignorance will not be admitted in England.

§. 1. Because it comes too late : Ah ! it's a thousand pities that a Receipt of such fame should be like, *post mortem Medicina* ; But is there no hope left under the lid of *Pandora's Box* ? The Church is a *successive Body* ; and though she may be Incurable in her present *Individuals*, yet she may recover, and revive in those of the next Generation : The Disease is not *Peracute*, but *Chronical*, and there may be some possible room for endeavour. What if a Thousand or two more of Ministers were silenced, and the Labours of as many discouraged and prevented ? what if Lectures were proscribed ? private Conferences interdicted ? and your *Twicers* suspended ? If it perform not all that may be desired, it might effect more than could be hoped : Oh no, *It comes too late !* for the People of England know so much already, that the only way to Cure the Inconveniencies of that, is to let them know more : This is excellent indeed, when the *Poison* becomes its own *Antidote*, and *Death* proves its own Cure, which but in one only Case, the amazed world never yet saw, and will hardly yet believe ; but thus they tell us of *Quick-silver*, that a little Dose will certainly kill, when a great one will Cure the twisting of the Gurs, and those *Intestine Dissentions* which thence arise in the Bowels : yet so it is : A little knowledge only ferments the natural pride of the Heart, which a round quantity would wipe off, and carry away : or to express it more elegantly from our Author, ' When men know a little, they conceit ' they understand all that's knowable, and hereupon refuse instruction, and oppose their private Opinions to the publick Wisdom : whereas, did these Men see further into things, they would ' then discover a reason of many things they are now dissatisfied with, or at least distrust their own understandings, and grow ' modest and peaceable. It becomes every good Christian, and

good Subject, (and he that is really the former, will certainly be the latter) to suspect the shallowness of his own judgment, and to Revere the depth of his Governours Wisdom; he may be an useful *Mariner*, that is no skilful *Pilot*, nor knows how to steer the publick bottom; but I do not remember that we have been discoursing about the expediency of the *transporting of Wool*, the making of War or Peace, or the mysteries of Government, *Que supra nos, nihil ad nos*; but our business is Religion, and the direct and immediate concerns of another Life: and how to Cure the Pride of the Understanding without putting out *its Eye*, and making it a *Polyphemus*: And here, though I suspect not the shallowness of the Governours Judgment, I dare not act against my own. I confess my self to seek in the great secret of a *private and publick Wisdom*, as much as I am in that of the *private and publick Conscience*, a superstructure raised upon that foundation: Nor have I learnt the difference between the *Roman Ignorance*, and resigning *my own Reason*; between darkness, and no use of Light; between having *no private Reason*, and renouncing it for the *publick Reason* in things directly respecting God and his Worship: The one is *born blind*, and the other has *lost his Eyes*; the one is the *Romish Opiate*, and the other a more gentle (if more gentle) *preparation of Laudanum*,

S. 2. He answers, secondly, 'If it had come timely, yet the Remedy is worse than the Disease; we esteem it better if one be necessary, to err like men, than to be driven like Beasts, or acted like Puppets: An Heroick Spirit! and such as may assure us, that our Physician will not cast us into a *Lethargy*, to prevent the Ravings of a *Fever*; and that he will not follow that Bishops Method, who had no other Cure for the *Head-ake*, than to cut it off. I have read of a *King of France*, who was extremely delighted in a Gentleman of his Bed-chamber, who had the proper Case of a Man, but his upper Rooms, it seems, were but furnish'd like Cock-lofts, with Lumber: This young Courtier, by some accident, took an occasion to fall into a *Thrensis* which elevating his Brain above its nature and dull temper, to a due height requisite for Raptures, created him *ex tempore*, a most accomplish'd Poet: Physicians are all summon'd, and they summon their Art to restore him to his former little self; success attends their Endeavours, and the Gentleman is at once delivered from his Distraction, and that greater madness, Poetry: The King having lost the satisfaction he conceived in his Ajry Fancies, and valuing a *Mad Virtuoso* before

a sober *Logger-head*, threatens to hang 'em up every Mothers Son, unless they did presently recover him again to *War*, by putting him *besides it*: such *Mountebanks* there are in the World, who cannot keep Men peaceable, unless they make them *stocks and stones*.

2. A second Remedy for Divisions much used by the *Romanists*, is their *Infallible Judge*, to which, whosoever pretends on this side a Deity, needs only his own mouth to confute him; what follows in our *Enquirer*, I read with much complacency: The *Scripture* plainly tells us that all men are lyars, such as may deceive, or be deceived; and most undoubtedly would never have made such a distinction of *Christians*, as strong men, and Babes in *Christ*, nor made it our duty to consider one anothers weakness, and practice mutual forbearance, if it had intended any where to direct us to such an *Umpire*, as should have ended all differences, and made all men equally certain. Much less, that the weak in judgment should be forced to keep pace with the strong in their practises, or that Babes should drive at the rate of grown men, Again, 'There was (says he) a time when the Apostles had the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in such a manner as to guide them into all Truth, and gave miraculous proof that they had so, and yet this would not cure all the Schisms, nor resolve all the Scruples, nor silence all Disputes: It must needs therefore seem unreasonable for them, who confessing a fallibility of judgment, should yet as peremptorily bind their Decretals upon the Consciences, as if they not only pretended to, but could give evidence of their Infallibility: It's noted for one of the impudent Essays of Papal presumption and Hypocrisie, that he calls himself, *Servus Servorum Dei*, and yet acts as if he were *Rex Regum & Dominus Dominantium*. I never liked *Jacobs smooth voice*, when I felt *Esau's rough hands*, and heavy Fists: when we hear of the publick Wisdom and Conscience, and both fallible; and yet like *Moses* his Rod, swallowing up the private Wisdom and Conscience, because they are fallible, I rejoyce in the great advantage of an Infallible God, who guides us by an Infallible Rule, to whom we may securely commit our Souls.

Nor can I see the so much boasted preheminance of their *Infallible visible Judge*, above our certainly *Infallible Rule*; for whatever this *Infallible Gentleman* determines, it must come to our cognizance either by word or writing, and then it amounts to no more than an *Infallible Rule*, and by consequence lyable to misinterpretations, and all the inconveniencies which they have unjustly charged upon the *Word of God*, which has been confirmed to us by

Autopsy;

*Autopsy*; for whatever have been his Determinations *De fide*, the Contenders retain their former sentiments, which they protest they would never do, were they assured in the true meaning of his Decrees.

Here I began first to suspect that this *second part of the Enquiries* could not possibly be the Child of the same Father with the former: For that other Enquirer assured us, that in the Primitive Times, all good men were of one way, and all bad men of another; that there was but one division of men, that *ἱεροὶ καὶ ἀσέβητοι*, were the only Sects that the World was known by; but this Enquirer tells us, That there were Schisms, Divisions, Scruples, Disputes in those early days, which the Holy Spirit given to the Apostles in such manner as to lead them into all Truth, would not Cure, resolve, nor silence.

Had the Apostles understood those frightful consequences which we have learnt to impute to diversities of judgment in lesser matters, with suitable variety in practice attending it, they might easily have silenced those disputes by the interposition of their Authority; and the Churches, no doubt, would as easily have acquiesced in the judgment of the Apostles, who could give irrefragable proof that they were sent of Christ.

Nor have those rigorous Decisions ever reacht their pretended ends, in healing differences, but only conspited them under the Ashes for a while, or taught men a little more craft to draw over the Articles to their private Opinions, rather than conform these to the publick belief.

3. Another Papal Remedy, is the Accommodation of Religion to the Lusts and Interests of Men, allowing them to think, believe, do any thing in the world, provided they be subject to the universal Pastor; for the Pope seeing that the World will not be brought over to him upon the terms of Christ, is content to come over to the world in Morals, if they will but come over to him in his Ceremonials. Much what of the same good nature with that other grand Impostor Mahomet, who when that sullen Mountain would not stir a foot to come to him, very courteously answer'd, *Then let us go to the Mountain.*

Whether this Prescription will be agreeable to, or practicable upon English Constitutions, is a great Question; The Author of the Second part, concludes that we of this Church have too much simplicity and sincerity of Devotion to make use of this Remedy to put an end to our Distractions And yet I find some have been tampering with it, who will be very strait-laced in Ceremonies to gratifie the superstitious,

perstitious, and widen the moral part to humour the voluptuous : Thus if *men's Lusts* will not bend to the *strait Rule of the Word*, they can gently bow the *Rule* to their *corruptions and crooked propensities* : And the Author of the former part seeing well that Men are grown too Pursey to be cramped up with the Religious observation of the *Lords-day*, has prudently accommodated the day to their latitude ; They that have no great mind to keep a *Christian Holy-day*, shall need but to call it a *Judaical Sabbath*, and they are well fortified against all the checks of their Consciences. I know the Reader will pity him that must contend with two such Adversaries, (*Hercules* himself would not engage a couple) but though they be *Two*, they have but one single *weapon*.

We want not some who can reconcile the levity of the Stage and Theater, to the gravity and severity of the Christian Doctrine ; that can reach men by their writings or Practice, how they may retain these vanities, and never throw off their *Baptismal Livery*, and it is upon good Advice : for should they lose such numbers from the party, it would make a filthy Hole in it ; and the weeding-out such Tares would make a thin Field of Corn ; and therefore some plead that they ought to grow together till the Harvest.

4 We are now come to the great and infallible Remedy, which the Pope trusts more to, than his *great Infallibility* ; But there are considerable diversities about the form of this Medicine in the Dispensatories : some ( as Mr. *Necessity Bays* ) express it by a tedious Periphrasis, *Axes, Halters, Racks, Fire, Faggot*, with an *Et-cetera*, which has more in't than all the rest ; but the *Romanists* who are *concise men*, and love short work, and to express *multum in parvo*, have Epitomiz'd all in that one word, the *Holy-Inquisition*, so called by the same *Catechresis*, by which we call our former Antagonist, the *Compassionate Enquirer*.

If you enquire a Reason of this *various Reading* ; know that it arises from the *different Copies* of the Dispensatories : The *Pharmacopœia* of London calls it one thing, that of Rome another ; the Titles differ, but the Medicine is the same : only Rome, according to her old overdoing undoing Humour, has added a few drops of the Spirits of Vitriol ; And yet the last Edition of ours at the *Old-Bayly*, re-assumes its former Title, and calls it downright, *The Inquisition of Spain*.

This Medicine is truly *Sovereign* ; it has the *Probatum* of thousands who *being dead, yet speak*, its answerableness to its primitive design, to silence all disputes, and stop the mouth of all gain-sayers :  
when

when all is done, there's no Argument convinces so effectually as *Stone-dead*; The wild-Irish themselves will beleive their Enemy to be dead, when his Head lies sever'd a Yard from his Body: But the Question will be still, *whether it will down with English-men*? for though they have good *Beef-Stomachs*, they want that of the Ostrich to digest Axes and Halters: There's no Question but it will go down well enough with them that give it; but it needs the assistance of much Rhetorick to perswade them into a willingness of mind, who are to take this wallowish potion: If we could agree who should be persecuted, there are enow could be content to be the persecutors, and this is one of the greatest Quarrels

That the Genius of this Nation (as our *Enquirer* informs us) is so *couragious*, and withall so *compassionate*, I am very glad to hear; the one part so *tender-hearted* that they will not *inflict*, the other so *tender-Conscienced* that they will endure what shall be so inflicted, rather than prostitute them to the lust and tyranny of men: but then I must conclude, that some of our Church-men are either *no English men*, or *no Christians*, whose tender mercies have been Cruelties: and whose compassions, like *Dracos Law*, are written in blood: And I rej yce to meet with these concluding words: *The exercise of so much cruelty upon the account of Religion in Q. Maries days, hath made that profession detestable to this day; and it looked so ill in the Romanists, that we shall never be perswaded to practice it our selves*: Had we but now an exact Definition of Cruelty, we should soon be satisfied whether the *Enquirer* would not perswade another to it, if not be perswaded to it himself.

None of the *Romanists* Expedients then will work this blessed Cure, they are either *Impracticable*, or *come too late*, or are *worse than the Disease*, or one mischief or another, There are therefore three others, which he will mention. *Universal Toleration, Comprehension, and Instruction and Consideration.*

1. The first is *Universal Toleration*: But here the *Doctors Man*, whom he sent a *simpling*, was horribly mistaken. And like *Elisha's* Servant whom he sent to gather good wholesome Pot-herbs, has imprudently pickt up your *poysinous Coloquintida*; An oversight that might have cost the Patient his Life.

*Universal Toleration*? I have observed English Spirits to bear some secret Antipathy to these Universals; They like not either Universal Bishop, nor Universal Monarch, nor Universal Grace, nor Universal Admission, nor this Universal Toleration: But what

if he had omitted *This Universal* in the Receipt; There may be a Toleration of what is Tolerable, whatever disturbs not the publick Peace; whatever contradicts not the Scriptures, the Creeds; whatever crosses not the great ends of Religion; whatever is peaceable, holy, humble, just, modest, righteous, though perhaps not *Ceremonious*: This Corrected Toleration has been given with Admirable success in the primitive and purer times; It fills up both pages in the Apologies of *Justin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, and *Tertullian*, who pleaded for a Toleration of their Innocent profession: It is the main ingredient in that famous Mass of *Pillula sine quibus esse nolo*, nay of *Pillula sine quibus esse nequeb*. The Scripture (sayd the Enquirer just before) has made it our Duty to consider one anothers weakness, and practice mutual forbearance: and what forbearance is without Toleration, I do not understand. Had the Imposing-Spirit obtained in the Infancy of the Church, they had saved the Heathens a labour, and destroyed each other; He might safely therefore in his *Irenicon* have used from a *Scruple* to a *drachm* of this Toleration; 'Tis the Herb *Gratia Dei*, the great *fratrum cholera*, which Adulces the blood, begers good Spirits, restrains surly Humours, and sweetens the tempers of one Christian towards another.

'Tis not the opening a *Pantheon*, but not shutting up the Temple of the one true God; not a licentiousness to blaspheme, but a liberty to glorifie our Redeemer, that we plead for; 'tis a privilege that every one has a claim to, that the Lives and Souls of them that have not wronged their Country, may be secure in it; If the works of the flesh be found amongst us, *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *Uncleaness*, *Laciviousness*, *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, *Hatred*, *Variance*, *Emulation*, *Bitterness*, *Strife*, *Seditious*, *Heresies*, *Envyings*, *Murders*, *Drunkenness*, *Revellings* and such like. We plead not for the guilty; only let the innocent find mercy at home, who in other places might expect a Reward. Is he a meet person to undertake the Healing of our Breaches, to compose our differences, that cannot distinguish between a Toleration in Ceremonies, and the Toleration of Idolatry? that knows not the nice difference between, Tolerating every thing, and nothing? If it be all one to indulge in things, confessed *Adiaphorous* at best, and the necessary duties of the Decalogue, talk no more of Healing; he must prove a Physician of no value, that when the balm of Gilead drops into his mouth, knows not how to Apply it.

2. The second propounded Remedy, is an excellent Openy; known



known to this present age by the name of *Comprehension*, which in our Authors Glossary signifies, *The making the Terms of Communion more free and easie, opening the Arms of the Church, to receive more into her Bosom, thereby to enlarge both the Society and Interest of the Church*: and one would think that so much Reason coucht in so few words, might have vindicated the Receipt above contempt, and recommended it to a *probationary experiment*; self preservation would make a harsher medicine than this go merrily down; if any thing make a Building strong, that must be carried to such a vast Height, that must bear such a weight, that shall be exposed to such shaking Winds, it must be a proportionable widening the foundation: But let us hear our Betters.

S. 1. *For my part* (says he) *If such a course please our Governours, I have no mind to oppose any thing to it.* Thy are infinitely obliged to him, surely, that if they please to shew kindness to tender-conscienced Subjects, he will not oppose, nor declare against them. This is a Moderation far beyond Mr. Bayes's hotter temper; he will tell them: *If they will Rule, they must, they must, they must,---* but is this all? I had thought he had brought with him *Licentiam ad practicandum*. A Commission to prescribe; and now I see he can do nothing without the Colledge: but what now if such a wholesome course please nor, though it profit, might it not have become a *Compassionate Enquirer*. to have forwarded them with an humble Hint or two of their interwoven *Interest and Duty*? when he preaches so admireably upon those points of *Reverence, Contentment, Submission, Charity*, and has shown his skill in the Theory, does he use to River it no better than thus? if these virtues please my Auditors, I have no mind to oppose; If you will be charitable, you may for all me, I'll promise you I shall never study your ruin, and plot your destruction. If Church-Governours please to enlarge the Society and Interest of the Church, If they please to strengthen it against its Enemies abroad, and procure it Peace and Contentment at home, he will not oppose: The best natur'd man that ever was in the World.

They who are Governours of the Church, are bound in Conscience to make the *Terms of Communion easie and free*; not to make the Yoke heavier than Christ made it. They that came in easily, ought to let in others upon the same terms: whoever they were that first clogg'd the Churches Communion with multitudes of unnecessary conditions, are like him that received a clear Estate of Inheritance from his Father, leaves it encumbered, and charged

to his Son, who perhaps may never be able to take off the Mortgage, and so shall thank his Father for just nothing: Christ made the way to Heaven narrow enough, and there's no need to make it straiter: Governours in the Church may easily mistake in the Quantity of their power, but this is sure, How great soever it be, they have all for *Edification, none for Destruction*. They ought not to reject those whom Christ will receive; And a little plain *English* would here have done no hurt, but have been Acceptable to the best of Church-men, whose misery it is to have *many flatterers* about them which let them know *their virtues*, but few faithful *Monitors*, who will acquaint them with *their Duty*.

§. 2. He desires it may be considered, that there are many things that look very probably in the general notion and speculation, that would flatter one into a great opinion of them, which when they come to be tryed, are no ways answerable. Therefore never attempt any thing that wears the Appearance of Honourable to the Worlds end; the benefits may possibly exceed, as well as fall below expectation. It was Davids counsel to Solomon, *up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee!* There are many things which in the general notion and speculation would terrifie one with appearances of Inconveniences, which when they come to be tryed, were the suggestions of Cowardice. Thus Children in the Twilight, seeing every object through the spectacles of their own fears, make that a Bear, which Nature calls a harmless *Bush*.

3. But many difficulties occur in the Reducing things of this Nature into practise, that were not foreseen in the Theory; and many blessings and mercies may and will occur, which will outweigh the difficulties in attaining them: the difficulties *momentary*, the advantages *perpetual*; the inconveniences *personal*, the benefits *general*, the prejudices to some few mens *too much plenty*, the Advantages to *many mens Souls*. It's a strange resolution, that we will not endeavour to be happy, for fear we should encounter a difficulty in the way thither; If the knot cannot be untied, *Alexanders* Sword will cut it: To withdraw from Apparent Duty, for fear of uncertain danger, is but like his, that would not shoot the Bridge, because it might possibly fall on's Head. Those accidents which can neither be foreseen nor prevented in doing a good work, are by wise men not to be regarded. I never hear such Arguments used against the attempts for preferments: I shall judge them real in their Declamations against Comprehension, when they use to discourage themselves from the same Difficulties

difficulties in seeking great things for themselves. The Sluggard cries out, *There's a Lion in the way*, when it's nothing but his own lazie Soul, that paints our dread and terrour to his Imagination: let none hereafter eat, because he may possibly find his Death, where he sought his Life: let none Travel, because he may be robb'd nor ride on Horseback, because he may possibly get a fall: There's nothing truly Glorious, but must be waded to, through difficulties, but some secret Lusts commonly pretend them greater than they are.

§. 4. *This is not done* (says he) *and we do not know when it will be set about.* That is, we will use the means when the end is effected: How happy had the Christian World been, if the first Imposers of Ceremonies had acted by those principles: such conditions are not Imposed, and we know not when they will, therefore we will never begin. But though it be not yet done, I know when it will be; When God shall open the Eyes of Church men to see the things that belong to their Duty, and the Churches peace; when all our totterings and shakings, shall have humbled us into more Condescension and Evangelical tenderness; When men shall see it both their Interest and Duty to secure the Building by enlarging the foundation, and that the security and stability of Society, lies in the Close Union of the parts; that the Beauty of a Church consists, much in the amplifying of the fold; Then will something of this nature be done, for which all generations shall call the Authors Blessed.

3. If then none of these Remedies be practicable, what must the languishing Patient do? There is yet one thing more, which is like those Cordials we use to drop into the Mouths of the dying, to procure the old admired *Ephraïma*, and that is *Instruction or Information*. Its pity the poor Clinical Church should dye under so many hands, and in the view of a whole shop of Medicines, and therefore rather this than nothing, which that it may be effectual, it will be necessary to consider. 1. Who are meet to give, 2. Who ought to receive Instruction. 3. From what grounds the instructions are to be fetcht, 4. What other means may possibly be administered.

§. 1. It's very considerable who are to be the *Instructors*, and called into the Consultation? For every one would be in the Chair, and none willing to be Auditors. The Brethren of the Episcopal persuasion having got the priviledg of Law, take it for granted, that they are the only persons meet for this service; whereas, if

the Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline of the Dissenters should prove nearer to the prescript of Scripture, no subsequent Law can possibly set it further off: That which was better before, the Ordinance of Man; cannot be made worse by it; Let therefore neither the one nor the other be the Instructors, but let the word of God instruct both: and this was the expedient of *Constantine the Great* at the opening the Council of *Nice*; He did not turn the Scale by his Authority; but delivers himself thus impartially, to the wrangling factions. *All seditious Contention set aside* (says he) *let us discuss the things in Controversie by the Testimony of the divinely inspired Scriptures*, as we are informed from the *Cath. Moderator*: And it was *Austin's* great reserve when he was pressed with the inartificial Argument of Authority, *Ne audiantur hæc verba, Ego dico & tu dicis, sed quid dicit Dominus*. Tell me not what you say; any more than I tell you what I say, but let us both hearken to what God shall speak, *Quod enim (as Hierom) de sacris Scripturis non habet auctoritatem eadem facilitate contemnitur, qua proponitur; whatsoever is not grounded upon the Scriptures, may with as much ease be slighted as 'tis urged.*

§ 2. Its material too, who are to be instructed? It's presumed by our Enquirer, that the Dissenters alone want a word of Advice, they only are Crooked; but whatever they want, as they will submit to, and be thankful for wholesome Council, so they conceive a word of Instruction will be necessary another way. When the Nonconformists are come to the End of their Tedder: when Conscience will suffer them to Advance not one step further. Others will need an Use of Instruction too, to go to the End of theirs: such Instruction as this of our Enquirers, the Creditor can give his Debtor whom he laid fast in *Ludgate*: Truly Friend! You have been reputed a discreet person, I wonder at you, and so do all that know you, that you will be so little a Friend to your ease, so obstinate against liberty, as to lye reezing your self in a smoke hole: you ought to submit your private judgment to that of the generality of mankind, who with one voice agree, that the fresh Air is much sweeter than this nasty Lodging! How much more proper had it been to have expostulated with this Cruel Creditor?

Sir! The poor man has paid you all he has, he is not worth a groat more in all the world: you may have his skin, but flesh he has none, shew now your Charity, and since he cannot release himself, but you may, shew your Charity. The Dissenters say this is their Case: they cannot come up to the propounded conditions

without sin, the Imposers may abate of the Conditions without sin, and therefore they are the proper Subjects of Instruction: Indeed I find the Nonconformists very shy in charging the terms to be sinful; they are loath to speak a word that may be interpreted any reflection upon the Church, and therefore commonly insist upon other pleas: but when Imporunity shall extort it from them, they must deal liquidly, and assert, that they cannot do these things, and sin against God thereby.

§. 3. From what grounds will this Instructor draw his instructions? I do the rather propound it, because I meet with great variety of them: some say, *Master, save thy self*; and to this they answer, *my Soul is my self*, and if *the Soul be lost, the Man is lost*. Others cry, oh be very tender of *Peace*! And they reply yes, and a little of *Truth* too. Others exclaim, you will bring in *Popery*! And they return, we did not make the terms of Communion; They that speak thus, are more Zealous to keep us out than *Popery*. The Arguments then must be drawn from such heads as are agreeable to the fixed Scripture-principles of those that come under instruction. Otherwise the Advice is no more but this: come over to our party, and there will be Peace! Why, so there will (reply the Dissenters) if you come all over to ours, or to any third party, There would be a Peace, an ill Cemented, ill grounded one; and such, as upon every occasion would break out in a more desperate Rupture.

§. 4. It's very considerable what this Gentleman will do, if his Instruction should prove Addle; For if neither a well Buttressed Toleration, cramped down soundly with wholesome Laws, nor yet a due Comprehension will be admitted; The condition of Dissenters would yet be supportable, if they might be kept to this wholesome Kitchen Physick of Instruction: But his Instructions look very like those of Spain, who use to exhort and instruct the poor wretches caught in the Iron Claws of the Inquisition, to be pitiful to their Souls, not to throw away their Lives, and presently shut up their last words with the Flames: What the Operation of this Instruction may be, I cannot tell, but the Dissenters I perceive have their last propositions sent in, and the next is Escalado; for he tells us, pag. 214. 'That if they will not be instructed, he sees 'no Obligation upon the Magistrate to forbear to make or execute such Laws as he apprehends for the good of his Government: so that after all his experiments, and great shew of skill in healing, he is wheeled about to that last, and worst of Papal

*Remedies, which some call Axes, Halters, Gibbets, Racks, Pillories, Imprisonment, others the Holy Inquisition; which is just the Plea of the Papists for all their Barbarities, That if the People will not be persuaded, they see no Reason why the Church should not deliver them over to the secular powers to be burnt for Hereticks.*

## CHAP. II.

*The Enquirers notion of Schism examined, and as applied to the sober Nonconformists, proved uncharitable, unjust and false.*

**S***chism is an Ecclesiastical Culverine, which being overcharged, and ill-managed, Recoyles, and hurts the Cannoneer. He that undertakes to play this great Gun, had need be very Curious, and careful to sponge his Canon well, lest it fire at home. Nothing has more naturally tempted the Imprudent to account nothing to be Schism, than that some hasty angry men have made everything so.*

*That causeless separation from a particular Church of Christ, whereof we were once daly Members, is a sin of a deep dye, is owned by all that own the Gospel, and have any tender regard to the prosperity of the Church, or propagation of the Truth, but yet we ought not to be so easily credulous, as to believe every departure to be that heinous thing, which passionate men, in hot blood, out of Prejudice to the persons of others, or a necessity to secure and establish their own Acquits over mens Consciences, are resolved to call so. It was not therefore lightly, but with great judgment, that the learned Hales calls it, 'one of those Theological Scarecrows, with which they who use to uphold a party in Religion, use to fright such as making any enquiry into it, are ready to Relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious.*

*St. Cyprian (it seems) affirms it to be of so horribly a Guilt, that Martyrdom was not a sufficient Expiation of it. And upon the like occasion he might have said as much of any other sin; for I have not learnt, that Martyrdom was design'd to expiate our sins, but to bear witness to Gods Truths: and the same Cyprian at another time will inform us, that 'Plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis, & Deum metuens à peccatore præposito separare se debet. A people fearing God, and Conscientiously obsequious to his Commands, (not only may, but) ought to separate it self from a scandalous and wicked Pastor. And therefore we may secure our*

selves, that such separation (in his judgment) is not *That Schism* which *Martyrdom* will not expiate.

The true reason why separation in the Scripture, and purer Primitive times, was esteemed a *Crime so unpardonable*, was, because the Church made no other Terms of enjoying her Communion, than Christ had made: That Superiors durst not venture the Churches Peace upon such a sandy foundation, as her own *Inventions*, turned into *Impositions*, for if the Terms of Communion, be of *Mans making*, the separation that ensues will be but a *Schism of mans making* too, and whether a Church has first a power to *make a sin*, and then to make it *damnable*, I have some reason to question.

Let nothing be declared *Schism*, but what the Scriptures have made so, and we shall be content it be made as great a sin as he can reasonably desire.

Had not our *Enquirer* been caried down in the torrent of his own overflowing Eloquence, till he had quite lost himself, he might have answered himself from his own words, p. 109. 'For this cause (*says he*) it pleased God that his Church, in those early days, should rather be harassed with persecutions, which made it unite it self the closer, and paring off all superfluities, keep to the necessary and essential Doctrines delivered to it, than to be softened, and made wanton by ease, and so to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel. Let a Church then return to the simplicity of the Gospel: Let her repent of that softness and wantonness of Spirit, which by Ease she has contracted. Let her pare off all superfluities, and keep close to the necessary and essential Doctrines delivered to it, and she shall find us as ready to write *Philippics* against *Schism* as himself, though we want his *Ciceronian* quill, and wordy excellencies.

Now though we are all convinced that *Schism* (*veri nominis*) is a most detestable Impiety; yet to beget in us a greater averfation from it, it may be profitable to listen to his reasonings, which are so potent, as will doubtless drain both the Conventicles and the Theatres.

S. 1. 'None (*says he*) can doubt of this, who considers what care our Saviour took to prevent it, what pains he took with his Apostles that they might be thoroughly instructed, and not differ in the delivery of his mind to the World. wee do with all humble thankfulness own the faithfulness of our Saviour in *instructing*, and the carefulness of the Apostles in *following their instructions*. They delivered to the Churches, as the whole Council of God, acts 20.



27. so, only the Council of God, 1. Cor. 11. 23. *I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you; And let but the Pastors of the Church imitate these patterns, keep exactly to their instructions from the Lord Christ, which we doubt not are proportionable to reach the ends of Unity and Peace, (else they had not been sufficiently instructed) and either we shall have no separations, or the case will be so plain, the separation so evidently schism, that the Schismatics shall not be able to obtend the least umbrage to cover their gross prevarication: But when Embassadors, thoroughly instructed in all the means to prevent that evil, shall go beyond their Instructions; and impose new, unheard of Terms of Communion, which never came into his heart to approve, nor ever came out of his mouth to impose; give me leave to say, thus far they are not Embassadors, and by consequence a Non compliance with them therein, cannot be interpreted any affront, but faithfulness to him who entrusted them with those dispatches: And if Christs instructions given to his Apostles to prevent this growing evil were insufficient, I am afraid they will be but sorrowfully helpt out, who have recourse to men for fuller instructions.*

§. 2. To prove the greatness of this sin, he observes (and we thank him for his observation) 'that the Apostles were industrious to resist all beginnings of schism in every Church, to heal all breaches, to take away all occasions of Division, to unite all hearts, and reconcile all minds: and to requite his kindness, I will repay his observation with this other; that they either are not the Apostles Successors in their healing Spirit, or else have seen some weighty reason to depart from their judgment about the heinousness of that sin, who instead of raking away the occasions of Divisions, which they have given: or removing the stumbling Blocks out of the way of Union, which they have laid, do give greater to, and lay more obstacles before the Christian world.

§. 3. His third proof is taken from the loveliness of Unity. 'It's not (says he) the sublimity of Christian Doctrine, nor the gloriousness of the Hopes it propounds, that will so recommend it to the opinion and esteem of beholders, as when it shall be said, *Ecce ut Christiani Amant*: when they shall observe the Love, Concord, and Unanimity amongst the Professors of it. The Enquirer has here stumbled at unawares upon the formal reason of schism, or sinful separation, which lies not in the variety of Opinions, or differing practices, modes or forms of Worship, but in a want of true love and charity: That which renders Christianity truly

beautiful and amiable in the Eyes of Beholders, is, that it teaches the Professors thereof to love one another with a *pure heart fervently*, though under different persuasions, as to Modes of Divine Worship and Discipline; That their hearts are larger to receive one anothers persons, than their heads are to conceive one anothers notions. But yet, as he is a fond Lover that chuses his Wife *by the Eye*, for the Symmetry of her external frame, or *cloathing of wrought Gold*, rather than those virtues which adorn the Soul; so he that chuses his Religion *by Sense, and not by Faith*, will make a most lamentable bargain; He that falls in love with Christs Church upon External Allurements and Extrinsic Motives, will either repent, or quit his choice when she is persecuted, her outward frame discomposed, her order violated, *the shepherd smitten, and the sheep scatter'd*; whereas, he that espouses Religion for those invisible glories which she propounds, and keeps in his steady eye, *the recompence of reward*, will adhere to his choice when she is *most black, and the Sun of Persecution* has too familiarly *looked upon her*.

But I shall not need to trouble my self, or the Reader, with any more of these fine Arguments; *Schism is an evil*, whether he be angry at it or no: and Separation *may be good*, whether he be pleas'd or no. All the Question will be, that seeing there is an apparent separation found amongst us from the Political Church of England, and supposing that there is sin one where or other, where the guilt of it ought to lye? The Enquirer has spoken a great deal of Truth in a few words, 'That some have found pleasure to get that Child, which they would by no means have laid at their own doors. A successful piece of Villany it is; which sometimes passes for a *Virtue*, for the Fathers who have begot these Brats, to expose them to be kept and maintained at the cost of the poor innocent Parish, and if we might guess at the true Father by the Childs Physiognomy, All the divisions which have so heavily charged the Churches having sprung from Ceremonies, from needless Impositions, from unnecessary Terms of Communion; They who take such pleasure to *beget the one*; may be presumed to have been the *Grandfathers of the other*.

If yet there be any controversy depending whose the Child is: The Enquirer recommends to us the Wisdom of Solomon, for discovering the True Mother, and because we know, *Partus sequitur ventrem*, if we can once find out the Damm, we shall make her confess the Sire: 'It was the early proof (*says he*) Solomon gave of his Wisdom in discovering the true Mother of the living Child,

to

' to which both the Litigants laid equal claim — I confess his illustration proceeds hitherto but very oddly; for *there*, the quarrel was, who should have the Child, and be reputed the true Mother: But *with us*, all the controverſie is who ſhall be diſcharged of it: But all ſimilitudes do not run on four Leggs, and it's very well if this will hop on one: obſerve how he lays both ends of his diſcourſe together: ' As that wiſe Prince diſcovered the true Mother by the tenderneſs of her Bowels towards the Infant, ſo we may perhaps diſcover the true Children of the Church by their reſpect and tenderneſs to her. Ay; juſt ſo no doubt! Even as the Wheelbarrow rumbles over the Pebbles, ſo a Thumb rope of Sand, will make an excellent Cable for Fiſhers-folly; The compariſon would run a little more naturally and regularly thus. As the true Mother was diſcerned by the tenderneſs of her Bowels towards the Infant, who would rather part with her right, than that her bleeding Eye ſhould ever ſee her Child divided, ſo we may perhaps diſcover the true Mother of the Church, by her condeſcending and relenting pity, who would rather wave her claim, and reſign her right in ſome leſſer inſtances, than ever endure to ſee body of Chriſt divided, by a Schiſmatical Dichotomy. And as the Harlot, not withſtanding all her pretences, bewrayed her ſelf to the diſcerning eye of that Judicious Prince, who could be content the Child ſhould rather dye, than ſhe loſe her moyry, ſo will ſhe evidence her ſelf to be a Stepmother Church, which peremptorily inſiſts upon a pretended right to Impoſe, at the Peril of the Churches Peace, rather than by waving thoſe pretences, ſave the endangred Church from imminent deſtruction: but ſome mens Allegories are never ſo excellent, as when they are impertinent, or non-ſenſe; and I preſume he found this Alluſion in the *Wiſdom of Solomon*, in the *Apocryphal Writings*.

We are come at length to the Queſtion, *what is the true notion of ſchiſm?* A point that deſerves to be handled with the greateſt exactneſs; for upon the True ſtating hereof, the iſſue of the whole controverſie depends. His notion, or definition of Schiſm, is this, ' Schiſm is a voluntary departure or ſeparation of ones ſelf, without juſt cauſe given, from that Chriſtian Church, whereof he was once a Member: Or, Schiſm is a breach of that Communion wherein a man might have continued without ſin. I ſhall not need to find faults, or pick holes in this definition, they will offer themſelves as he opens the Terms, only I obſerve,

(1) That it offends against one of the sacred Laws of Definition, which ought to be most religiously and inviolably preserved: *Definitiones debent cum Definito reciprocari*; The Definition ought to be convertible with the thing defined: And that this is not so, is evident, because there may be a Schism where there is no separation from External Communion: There is a Schism in a Church, as well as from Church. The Churches Garment may be rent, and yet not rent in two: Thus the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 18. 'When ye come together in the Church, I hear there are Divisions amongst you: *ἀλλοιζισμοὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχοντες*, ch. 12. v. 5. That there may be no Schism in the Body *ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι*. That Definition which is as narrow as his Charity, and leaves out those who ought to be taken in, must necessarily be stark naught. (2.) This Definition is very short, in expressing that which is indeed the Poison and Venom, the formal Reason of all Schismatical departure; viz. the want of Charity and true Evangelical Love! for he that departs from a Society, yet loves the real Christians therein, and the Society it self, so far as it is a Church of Christs institution, only he loves his own Soul with a more intense love and accordingly makes the best provision for it he can. and would rejoyce that others would accept of the same Advantages, ought not to be called a Schismatick; but if they who pretend to a power to stamp what significations they please upon words, will call him so, the best is, no Nicknames will prejudice him in the sight of that God, who searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins. As Heresie is opposed to the Faith, so Schism is opposed to Love; and Heresie and Schism are distinguished by those things to which each of them is opposed.

3. It's faulty for its ambiguity: because he tells us not what the Christian Church is, from whence the departure must be made to denominate it Schismatical; If he means a particular Congregation united under its proper Pastor according to the Laws of Christ, it will prove it Schismatical to depart from a Church of Nonconformists. If he understands a National Church, he should do well to prove, that such a Church is of Christs institution; but I shall wave these and many more till he has discontended upon the particulars of his own Definition.

§. 1. 'I call it (says he) a departure or separation from the Society of the Church, to distinguish it from other sins, which though

' though they are breaches of the Laws of our Religion, and consequently of the Church, yet are not a renunciation of the Society. There may be such a Person, who for his wickedness deserves to be cast out of the Church, as being a scandal and dishonour to it, yet neither separating himself, nor being cast out of the Society, remains still a Member of it. This is indeed too true, and hence it is, that many Churches are so over run with scandalous Debauches, that there's very little difference between the impaled Garden, and the wide Wilderness: And perhaps was there more of this *Authoritative separation*, there would be less of that prudential separation: If rotten and gangreened Members were cut off, the sound would not have that necessity to provide for their own security; If the Contagion were not so Epidemical, there were less need to seek out for better and more wholesome Airs: when an Impudent Blasphemer, who out-faces the Sun, the Notoriety of whose crime needs no Dilator, shall yet quietly maintain his station in a Church, whilst others for not coming up to a Ceremonie, shall be rejected, though otherwise holy and inoffensive, men may make Models and Idea's of Schism to save their credits long enough, before they will be much regarded.

§. 2. I call it ( says he ) a *voluntary separation to distinguish sin from punishment, or Schism from Excommunication*. Yes, but he ought to have called it *Voluntary* upon a higher account, in opposition to such departure as is made with *regret and reluctancy*: for when a sincere Christian has used all due means to inform himself of the Truth of such a Principle, or the Lawfulness of such a practice as may be made the condition of Communion with that Society; when he has asked advice of God and his Word, when he has prayed with David, that God would *open his Eyes*, when he has conferred with the most judicious and impartial Christians, when he <sup>has</sup> humbly and modestly represented to the Pastors ~~has~~ and Governours of that Church, the suspected condition, or the innovation crept into the Church, and yet can neither procure Reformation of the abuse, nor toleration of his particular non-compliance, nor yet find satisfaction of the Lawfulness of such practice, he may without guilt withdraw himself from that Society; nor ought this to be charged upon him

him as a departure, having in it any thing of sinful voluntariness: when a Merchant throws his Lading over-board to preserve Life, I grant that he may be said willingly to throw it away, because his precious Life preponderates and turns the Scale of the will, yet none will condemn that poor Merchant of too little affection to his Merchandice. Thus when a Christian can find no rest, no satisfaction to his Conscience from those suspected conditions, which in the constant exercise of his Communion do recur, and shall recede from that Society, joyning himself to another, where with full satisfaction of Spirit he may pursue his own Edification, such a one ought not to be charged with a voluntary departure, nor shall it be charged upon him as such in the judgment of him that shall judge the World.

§. 3. 'I call it ( says he ) a departure from a particular Church, or from a part of the visible Church, to distinguish 'it from Apostacy, which is a casting off the whole Religion, the name and profession of Christianity: But here his definition is very crazie, and ill joynted: for it ought to be defined a departure from a particular Church of Christ; to distinguish it from such a Constitution, as is either no particular Church of Christs institution, or none, so far as the separation is made from it: such a one as is not united under Christs Officers, nor conjoynd by Christs Ligaments: Christ has taken special care that there may be no Schism in the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 25. And for this end he has commanded a spirit of mutual forbearance and condescension; he has mingled and tempered the Body together with such exact geometrical proportion, that each of the parts may care for the other; for this end also he has instituted some extraordinary Officers, whose work and Office was to cease with the present exigency and occasion, and the ordinary, whose Office and Employment ( as the Reasons of them ) were to be perpetual. Now if any Society of Men, calling themselves a Church (and in the main respects being really so) retaining the great Doctrines of Christianity, and such Ordinances whereby Salvation is attainable, shall yet put it self under other Officers than Christ has appointed, and practice other Ordinances than he has instituted, and make Communion with her impracticable, without submitting to such Officers,

such

such Ordinances; Separation from that Society, can be no separation from a particular Church of Christ: Because, though they may be such a Church in the main, yet so far as the separation is made, they are not so, and they deny Communion with them, so far as they are a Church of Christ; because of non-submission to them, so far as they are not a Church of Christ.

§. 4. 'I add (says he) these words--whereof he was once a Member, because Schism imports division, and making two of that which was but one before. So that if an Act was made to divide some of our greater Parishes (which are much larger than some of the Primitive Diocesses) into two, under their distinct Pastors, this must be a Schism, according to this famous definition; for here is, 1. A voluntary departure, 2. From a particular Church. 3. Whereof once they were all Members; and wherein 4. they might all have continued without sin.

But the most considerable thing here will be, how I became a Member of that Church, from which the departure is supposed to be made; for 1. To be forced into a Church, will never make me such a Member, but that I may re-assume my liberty and right when the force is removed; Violence and Constraint unite me no otherwise to a Church, than a great Beetle unites a Wedge to a Tree; which though it may by main strength be driven into the Tree, yet not being engrafted into it, no Union is created with it, nor does it derive any nourishing juices from it. 2. Baptism alone will not do it: because as I conceive, that Ordinance solemnly unites me only to the Catholick visible Church, and not to a particular Congregation; otherwise, whenever the Providence of God shall transplant me into another particular Church, I must be re-baptized, and so as often as I remove, because as to that Church I am unbaptized. 3. Nor will my being born and bred within National limits and precincts denominate me a Member of such National Church or Constitution, because it passes for a currant Maxim, That the Church is not the Commonwealth, and therefore Church and Kingdom; Church-member and Subject are not Terms of equal extent and dimensions. And besides, there are many Congregations of Christians in this Nation, not syncretizing with



with the National Policy, who yet are not stigmatized with the Brand of Schismatical, but without the least reproach of Schism Worship God, and exercise Discipline according to their own private and peculiar Laws. 4. Therefore to make me a Member of a particular Church, there must be the concurrence of my own free choice, which whether it ought to be signified by express and overt Acts, or that an implicate and tacite consent may not suffice, is here no season to Discourse,

§. 5. *But the only difficulty* ( I am sure the greatest ) is, that which he subjoins in these words - 'An unnecessary separation, or without just cause, or to separate from that Society wherein I may continue without sin. Two extreams there are it seems.

1. *Of The Zealots of the Church of Rome, who scarcely allow any thing as a sufficient cause of separation:* But I look on this as a very unjust surmise of the Romanists; for their most rigid Zealots will in *Thesi* allow *sinful conditions*, imposed for a just ground of *sinless departure*, only they deny to individuals a judgment of discretion to determine each for himself of the *sinfulness of the condition*; And thus what they seem to give with the right hand, they take away with the left: And herein our Enquirer is as strait laced as they; for though in the general he will prodigally allow us, that *sinfull Impositions* are a just plea for separation, yet he has forestalled that concession all along with a fine contrivance; That *our private Wisdom* must lower the Top-sail to the publick. Thus p. 64. 'Since the peace of the Church often depends upon such points as Salvation does not, and since in many of those, every man is not a Comperent judge, but must either be in danger of being deceived himself, and of troubling others, one of necessity must trust some body else wiser than himself; so that the matter according to this Gentlemans Hypothesis, is just as long as 'tis broad; but that the Church of Rome speaks that with open Mouth, which he delivers between the Teeth.

2. The other supposed extream is, that of some Protestants, who make the causes of separation as many, and as  
light

light as the Jews did of Divorce, almost for any matter whatsoever: But as our Saviour, when the case was put, found out a middle way betwixt Divorce for no cause at all, and for every cause, so ought it to be done in this business of Schism.

Reader, we are now in a hopeful way for the compromising all the controversies that have vext our Northern Climate, and to seal general Releases of all Actions, and causes of Actions against each other, from the beginning of the Reformation, to the day of the Date of these presents: for as we may charitably presume of all our Episcopal Brethren, that they will stand to the final award of so great an undertaker as our Enquirer, so I am confident I may engage for all the dissenting Brethren, that they will abide by the Umpirage of Jesus Christ; and that whatever expedient he used in deciding the grand Question about Divorce, shall conclude them in all their debates about Schism: Now the final Decision of that affair we find, Mat. 19. 8. Where our Saviour considers not what could plead inveterate Custom or a gray headed practise to abet its pretensions, he slights all the Arguments from laudable Examples, and the Traditions of their Forefathers, and runs up the practice to its Primitive Institution; and tells them, *From the beginning it was not so*. And indeed if a Transcript be blotted or blurr'd, we presently have recourse to the Original, and from thence redintegrate whatever the hungry worm, or greedy Moth hath defaced: when the Streams are muddied and pollured, we relieve our selves from the Spring, where the Virgin, and unpolluted waters, flow clearest and sweetest, without Adulterate mixtures. It was the cry in the Council of Nice, *Ἀρχαία ἢ θη νεώτερα*, and we cry the same one and all, Let the Terms of Communion in the first Plantation of the Gospel-Church be produced, and he that will not subscribe, and submit to those Archetypes, let him be branded for an obstinate Schismatick.

Now therefore if ever our Enquirer promises himself and us, that he will *Hit the mark*; I say then, and then only,

only, is there just cause of separation; when persevera-  
 in the Communion of such a Church cannot be without sin,  
 that is, when she shall impose such Laws and Terms of So-  
 ciety, as cannot be submitted to, without apparent breach of  
 the Divine Law, Thus he says! And if I should tell the  
 Reader, I say the contrary, we should make a squable  
 on't, to render our selves ridiculous; let it therefore  
 neither be what I say, nor what he says, but what  
 wiser men than us both say, who may be presumed more  
 impartial in their Judgments, wherein they vindicate the  
 Dissenters, because they were, or are eminent Members  
 of this Church. And first I will present him with the  
 judgment of Mr. Hales, a Person of whom the Church  
 of England has great cause to boast. Now amongst many  
 other things to our purpose, in his *Treatise of Schism*, he  
 acquaints us; 1. 'That when either false or uncertain  
 'conclusions are obtruded for Truth, or acts either un-  
 'lawful or ministring just scruple, are required of us to  
 'be performed? in these cases, consent were Conspira-  
 'cy, and open Contestation, is not Faction or Schism,  
 'but due Christian Animosity. 2. That nothing absolves  
 'men from the guilt of sin, but true and unpretended  
 'Conscience. Therefore such a Conscience will absolve from  
 the guilt of it. 3. That where the cause of Schism is necessa-  
 'ry, there not he that separates, but he that is the Cause  
 'of the separation is the Schismatick. 4. That to require  
 'the execution of some unlawful or suspected act, is a  
 'just cause of refusing Communion; for not only in Reason,  
 'but in Religion too; that Maxim admits of no Re-  
 'lease, *Cautissimi cujusque præceptum, quod dubitas ne se-*  
 '*ceris.* 5. That it hath been the common Disease of Christi-  
 'ans from the beginning, not to content themselves with  
 'that measure of Faith which God and Scriptures have  
 'expressly afforded, but out of a vain desire to know more  
 'than is revealed, they have attempted to devise things,  
 'of which we have no Light neither from Reason nor Re-  
 'velation; neither have they rested here, but upon pretence  
 'of Church Authority (which is none) or Tradition,  
 '(which for the most part is but feigned) they have pe-  
 'remptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others  
 'a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature. 6. To  
 'load

load our public forms with the private fancies upon which we differ, is the most Sovereign way to perpetuate Schism unto the Worlds end. Prayer, Confession, Thanksgiving, Reading of Scriptures, Administration of Sacraments in the plainest and the simplest manner, were matter enough to furnish out a sufficient Liturgie, though nothing, either of private Opinion, or of Church Pomp, of Garments, or prescribed Gestures, of Imagery, of Musick, of matter concerning the Dead, of many superfluities which creep into the Church, under the name of Order and Decency, did interpose it self. To charge Churches and Liturgies with things unnecessary, was the first beginning of all Superstition. 7. *That* no occasion hath produced more frequent, more continuous, more Sanguineous Schisms, than Episcopal Ambition hath done. 8. *That* they do but abuse themselves and others, that would perswade us, that Bishops, by Christs institution have any Superiority over other men, further than that of Reverence: or that any Bishop is superior to another, further than positive Order agreed upon amongst Christians, hath prescribed. 9. *In* times of manifest Corruptions and Persecutions wherein Religious assembling is dangerous: Private Meetings however, besides publick Order, are not only Lawful, but they are of necessity and duty: All pious Assemblies in times of Persecution and Corruption, however practised, are indeed, or rather Alone the Lawful Congregations, and publick Assemblies, though according to form of Law, are indeed nothing else but Riots and Conventicles, if they be stained with Corruption and Superstition.

There is one Person more, whom, since he has quoted *Incognito* for an excellent Person, I will the rather recommend to his consideration. *Irenic*. p. 109. where speaking of the private Christian, he says; *He is bound to adhere to that Church, which appears most to retain the Evangelical purity.* And p. 116. *He is bound to break off from that Society which enjoyns a mixture of some Corruptions as to practice:* One word from Dr. Jackson, chap. 14. of the Church: where he acquits those of the Schism which withdraw from that Church which imposeth Rites and Customs, that cross the Rule of Faith and Charity. Bishop Bramhall's Testimony will pass for sterling, p. 7, 8. of Schism: *When there is a mutual division of two parts, or members of the mystical Body of Christ one from*

from the other ; yet both retaining Communion with the universal Church, 'quamcunque partem amplexus fueris Schismaticus non Audies, quippe quod, universa Ecclesia neutram damnavit : Which side soever you close with, you shall not be reproacht for a Schismatick, because the universal Church has condemned neither side : And he plainly tells us, p. 101, That it was not the erroneous Opinions of the Church of Rome, but the obtruding them by Laws upon other Churches that warranted a separation.

Next we will hear a word from the Learned Lord Verulam, 'Tis a sign ( says he ) of exasperation to condemn the contrary part as a Sect ; yea, and some indiscreet Persons have been bold in open Preaching, to use dishonourable and derogatory speeches and censures of the Churches abroad, and that so far, as that some of our men ( as I have heard ) ordained in foreign parts, have been pronounced no Lawful Ministers,---And further ; let us remember, that the Ancient and true bounds of unity, are one Faith, one Baptism, and not one Ceremony, one Policy ; and endeavour to comprehend that saying, *Differentia Rituum commendat unitatem Doctrinae* : Christs Coat was indeed without Seam, yet the Churches Garment was of divers Colours.

Amongst all these, we must not forget the Noble and Gallant Person the Lord Falkland, A little search will find them, ( He speaks of no little ones ) to have been the destruction of Unity, under pretence of Uniformity ; to have brought in superstition and scandal under Titles of Reverence and Decency, to have slack'd the strictness of Unity, which was between us, and those of our own Religion beyond the Seas.

Socrates, lib. 5. cap. 21. tells us, that in his time there could scarcely be found two Churches that used the same Forms of Prayer. In France, the Ritual of Paris differ'd from that of Anjou, and in England we had our Devotions *secundum usum Sarum* and *secundum usum Bangor* ; and yet the one never reproacht the other for Sectaries or Schismatics ; I am confident therefore to assert it, That neither the Wit nor Malice of man can prove him a Schismatick, who maintaining Evangelical Love towards, and holding the substantial Doctrines owned by the Church of England, shall either out of choice, or necessity, transplant himself from under the spreading shadow of a goodly Cathedral, to a Parochial Church, and yet the one hath its Organs, Adoration

Adoration towards the *East*, and *Altar*, Adoration at the *Naming of Jesus*, with multitudes of Rites and Observances, unknown to the Villages, and far more differing from the Parochial Usages and Customs, than the Worship of most country Towns differ from that of the *Non-conformists*.

After all this, I shall throw up the Authority of these great names, and give him full scope for his Rational Abilities, to prove his Proposition, when I have first noted those few things.

§ 1. He requires an *apparent breach of the Divine Law*, as the only thing that can excuse Separation from the *guilt of Schism*: but will not a *real breach* of the Divine Law serve the turn, unless it be *so apparent* as he can desire? I perswade my self, God never yet spake so loud, that they who have barracadoed their ears with prejudice, will hear him: nor ever yet wrote so plain, that they will see his mind, whose eyes Interest hath sealed up: And what if it be an *apparent breach* of the Divine Law in the sincere judgment of him that separates; must he never discharge his Duty, till he can perswade all the world to see theirs, and pursue it.

§ 2. Who shall be Judge, whether the Imposed Terms contain an *apparent breach of the Divine Law*? and such as will justify a separation? Mr. Hales indeed tells us, *It's a point of no great depth or difficulty*; but yet the *true solution* of it, carries fire in the tail of it; for it brings with it a piece of *Doctrine* which is seldom pleasing to Superiors. But were it not that men hate chargeable Truth more than cheap Error, and love cheap Corruptions beyond costly Reformation, there could be no great difficulty who should be Judge in this case: For 1. Who may more justly challenge a Liberty to judge *what is sin*, than he that must be damned if he do sin: He that sins at anothers Command will hardly perswade him to be his substitute in the Condemnation, nor will God accept him for the sinners proxy. 2. If the Church may judge; Then though her terms be the most apparent violations of the *Divine Law*, yet there can never be any *lawfull separation*, unless we can imagin her *so modest*, as to confess a sin, and yet at the same time, *so immodest* as to impose it. To acknowledge her Terms *sinfull*, and yet with the same breath to enjoin them as necessary to Communion.

It will be pretended, that the same inconveniencies will follow the other way: for if a particular person who withdraws, must judge, then let the Terms be *perfectly Innocent*, yet to be sure,

he will plead, that they are *sinfull*; unless we can suppose him *so modest*, as to *confess* himself a Schismatick; and yet at the same time *so immodest*, as to persevere in his Schism. But I conceive that this arguing is very wide: 1. Because every mans Soul lies at stake, and it cannot be imagined that he should either not study its Interest, or that understanding it, he should not endeavour to secure it: I speak of such as are *otherwise conscientious*; for if he be a person vitious, and profligate, one caten up of wickedness, we ought not to flatter our selves with any great hopes of the impartiality of his determinations: And if he have thus debauched his Conscience, the Laws are open; The Magistrate who has his power from the *Moral Law*, has by the same Law sufficient Authority to coerce by punishments, whatever Enormities are committed against it. 2. We have no reason to suppose any man to be a Hypocrite in the matter of Separation, which is attended with so many dreadfull penalties, unless notorious evidence will warrant such a Judgment.

§ 3. A rational suspicion of the breach of a *Divine Law* is enough in the Apostles judgment to justify the suspension of my own Act; and if it prove no other then a thing indifferent in it self, yet such dissatisfaction will excuse from sin: for so the Apostle, *Rom. 14. 5. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 14. To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 23. He that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith, for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.*

The Enquirer has all this while stood like the very picture of Modesty, equally placed between the two extrems of *all Separation*, and *no separation*: have but a little patience, and you shall see how manfully he will behave himself against them both.

1. For the poor *Romanists*, he gives them a small pat with his Foot, and they are silenced for ever. *It's plain (says he) it can be no sin to separate, when it's a sin to Communicate. Yet very plain it is! but so say the Dissenters. It can be no sin for us to separate, when it's a sin to communicate: Ay but (says he) It was an apparent breach of the Divine Law upon which we separated from Rome. Why so say the Dissenters: It's an apparent breach of the Divine Law, upon which we separated from the Church of England. Ay but (will he say) you ought to have trusted wiser men than your selves, and not like the Antipodes, to have run upon*



upon your heads: Oh! but then comes in the *Romanist*, and falls upon his bones: *You ought to have trusted wiser men than your selves, your Superiours in the Church, from whom you separated, and not have ran upon your heads:* Nay, replies he, but we have a *judgment of Discretion*, and ought to be *Masters of our own Reason*, so far as to take *Cognizance of our own Acts*: Well! The *Non-conformists* catch that word by the end, before it be well out of his Mouth; We are for a *judgment of Discretion* too, and ought so far to be *Masters of our own Reasons*, as not to act against them; nothing can be returned than I can foresee, but that it is not for such pitifull sneaks as the *Dissenters*, to talk of *Conscience*, and a *judgment of Discretion*, its enough for the *Gendarms of reason* to make use of that plea against Rome, But I will leave him to squabble it out with the *Romish Synagogue*.

2. He has quickly (you see) shaken them their foddering; but these cumbersome Fanaticks stick as close to him as a Burr, and therefore he must now give them a rattle.

It's plain (says he) that Schism being so great a sin, and of so extream bad consequences, that which must acquit me of the guilt of it in my separation, can be nothing less than an equal danger on the other hand, and that when I may persevere without sin, it must of necessity be a sin to separate upon inferior dislikes. This looks pretty well at first but for a few Inconveniences in the Argument. 1. That he begs the whole Question at a Clap, the question was, whether the Imposition of such Laws and Terms of Society as cannot be submitted to without apparent breach of the *Divine Law* be the only just cause of separation? He affirms it, and for proof gives us this, that Schism being so great a sin, that which must acquit me of the Guilt of it in my separation, must be equal danger of sinning: wherein he supposeth that all separation is Schism, where there is not equal danger of sinning; that is, of an apparent breach of the *Divine Law*, which is but the question a little disguised to make it more passable to the unwary Reader; the truth is, Schism is so great a sin that no danger of sinning whatsoever can acquit me of it, for I do not know that any thing will compound for uncharitableness, for pride, for obstinacy, but separation for the benefit of all Gods Ordinances, that I may be edified and built up in the most holy Faith, but nothing of the nature of that abominable sin in it. 2. Dissenters will answer, that the danger of sinning is more clear and evident when I act against my Conscience, than in the separating peaceably and modestly from a particular Church: for it cannot be law-

full in any Case to act against my light, but it may be lawfull in some Cases to separate from a particular Church: there is less danger of sin in breaking a humane Constitution, which ('tis at least) questionable whether man has power to enjoin, than of violating the dictate of my own reason informed by all the mean I can use from the Word of God. 3. Non-conformists say, that they ought not to separate, but when non-separation is sinfull, but then they say, that non-separation may be sinfull upon other accounts than the apparent breach of the Divine Law made the terms of entring into, or continuing in communion: for, say they, it is our sin, if a Church retains some corruptions in it, which *prejudice edification*, and she shall resolve never to make any further progress towards a thorough Reformation, not to provide for my self elsewhere, and having opportunity, I sin if I take not, accept not the advantage which providence offers me, and wherein the Word warrants me.

And yet he wonders that any doubt should be admitted in this Case. Let me advise him to beware of Excessive wonderment: they say, it will make a man as lean as a rake: but what's the Cause of his admiration? Why some think to wash their hands of the Imputation of Schism upon other terms; as namely, if a Church shall not require such terms of Communion as are Expressly sinfull, yet if she shall require indifferent unnecessary, or at most suspected things, that in this case there is enough to Excuse the person that shall separate from a participation of this sin: There are some no doubt of that Judgment: and when I have prælibated a few things, he shall have his full blow at them.

§ 1. That when they joyn issue upon this point, 'tis not because they are satisfied that the things required unto Communion as the antecedent conditions of it, or to be practised in communion as the matter of it are indifferent in their use and application, for they are ready to maintain it upon equal laws, before equal Judges, that they are sinfull in their use, antecedent to their imposition, but the true reasons why they use this *place* are, 1. *Ex abundanti*, thinking that their very out-works are impregnable against his batteries. 2. Out of this Church which they highly honour, and reverence her too much then to charge her flatly with sinfull impositions; and therefore do offer this state of the question, and are hardly capable of so much incivility to so considerable a body, and so great a part of the visible Catholick Church, unless the im-

importunity of some modest men did extort that answer from them. 3. They doubt whether some Churchmen will be Masters of so much patience as to bear freedom though temperateness of speech, which is absolutely necessary to the managing the Controversie when thus stated: and have reason to fear that some who provoke them to assert the *sinfulness of the terms*, will make such an Assertion an unpardonable sin, not to be expiated without, if with Martyrdom.

§ 2. When he states the question about things *suspected to be sinfull*, I hope he will give them the common civility to draw up their own plea in their own terms, and to Explain what they mean by *suspected things* in the question: because they are not compelled to maintain Every proposition which he in his well known charity shall obtrude upon them: A practice then may be taken upon suspicion of sinfulness two ways, first, *upon light, slight, trivial grounds of suspicions*, which have no weight, with a serious and rational Considerer: Or 2dly, *upon violent presumptions*, such as may stagger a person of good judgment and diligence: and 'tis these that they are willing to argue it with him; whether if a Church shall impose such things as the terms of Communion with her, as have, or do, or may puzzle judicious persons about their Lawfulness, and cannot clear it up to their Consciences that they are Lawfull, yet they may not forbear Communion in this Case.

§ 3. They desire the same justice in explaining themselves about the term *indifferent*: *A thing may be indifferent in its own nature*, which is not so *in its use*, as implied to and practised in the immediate worship and service of God; If the things under debate be found upon diligent search to remain indifferent after they were vested with all their circumstances in Gods worship, they have no quarrel against them that I know of; but if they be only indifferent in their own *general nature*, they desire to be Excused if they dare not admit the consequence, that therefore they must needs be so when *used in Gods worship*, & then made the *terms of Communion*.

§ 4. Unnecessary things may be either such as are *absolutely unnecessary*, or such as are *hypothetically* so, some things that are not *absolutely* and in themselves necessary, yet may become necessary *pro hic & nunc*, even antecedent to the interposition of the Churches Authority; And Dissenters say, that whatever the Church shall impose ought to be necessary, *either in it self, or by concurrent Circumstances*, which when they shall conspire to-

gether, may be by a Lawfull authority Enjoyed *pro tempore*, that is, so long as such necessity shall continue, which when once removed, the things ought to return into their former *Classis of Indifferents*.

§ 5. When they deny the Churches power of imposing things *expresly sinfull*, they deny also a power of imposing things *sinfull by just consequence*; They judge many things *sinfull* which are not forbidden, *καὶ τὸ πῶτις*, in the Scriptures, and many things duties which are not *Literally and Syllabically* commanded in the Scriptures: They say not that the *sign of the Cross* was ever by name prohibited: but they say there are undoubted maxims laid down in the word, from which it will undeniably follow that in its present station in the Church it is *sinfull*; And now he may when he pleases speak his three things, which if they be pertinent and *proved as strongly as they are spoken confidently*, I am content.

( 1. ) His first say consists of a *Concession* and an *Affertion*.

§ 1. His *Concession*, I willingly acknowledge that such a Church as shall *studiously or carelessly clog her Communion with unnecessary, burdensome and suspected conditions*, is very highly to blame, that is, *she sins*; but that it became not him to tell her so; and then I will venture to say a few words also. 1. If it be the Churches sin to command *unnecessary, burdensome, and suspected conditions*; It cannot be my duty to obey: A Church may possibly sin in the manner of her Command, and yet I not sin in doing the matter of the Command, but when *she sins in the Enjoyning*, I cannot conceive how it should be my sin not to give Obedience; for I look upon my Duty as the result of the Churches Authority, and wherein she has no Authority it will be impossible to find a Foundation upon which to build my Duty: All offices of Justice arise from that relation wherein he that *claims* and he that *yields subjection* stand to each other: And where there's no relation, there can be no relative duty: now in this case before us where the Church has no power to command, nay, *where she sins*, if she commands, so far she is none of my Superiour; and therefore so far the relation is none, and by consequence the duty just as much. 2. If the Church be to blame highly, nay, *very highly to blame*, that clogs her Communion with these *burdensome things*, then we may presume *she sins*, for who shall dare to assume so much freedom as to blame her, unless she transgress the Law of her God? If then she have sinned and transgressed some Law of God, it must be some negative

gative precept, *thou shalt not impose burdensome things*; for it is a principle our *Enquirer* will not sell for Gold: *That whatever is not forbidden, is Lawfull*; If then God had not forbidden her to impose such burdensome things, she could not sin, or be to blame in so doing (according to his principles) now say I, the same God that has prohibited the Churches Imposition of, has also prohibited *my subjection to burdensom conditions*: And let this Gentleman produce his Scriptures for the one, and I will drop Texts with him for the other when he pleases; Thus we are commanded, 1 Cor. 7. 23. *not to be the Servants of men*: not only *bought with a price*, and set free once, but commanded to assert that freedom, and Gal. 5. 1. *to stand fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and not again to be entangled in the yoke of bondage: Now if ever these Scriptures do us any service, or be of any use, it must be in this particular, that I am obliged not to take a burden and cumber upon my Soul, at his hands who has no Authority to impose it: If then a Church shall clog her Communion with burdensom things, she is to blame, she sins, and I am not bound to obey, and therefore my departure can be no Schism, I mean no Schism but one of *mans creating*. 3. If a Church sin in clogging her Communion with things which without crime or fraud are *suspected of sin* upon such grounds as are allowed just and ponderous in other cases, then it cannot be my sin to separate: for the Church sins in commanding, and I should sin against the Authority of God in my Conscience in doing what I really upon *strong presumptions* judge to be sinfull, though it were not commanded: And now one would think it could be no such meritorious work, no act so acceptable to God to persevere in the communion of a Church, when she sins in commanding, and I sin in obeying suspected conditions.

§ 2. We come now to his Assertion: Notwithstanding all this which he has granted, he will fetch it back again, if it be possible, and we shall gain nothing by any thing he gives us, and there are also two parts of his Assertion. 1. The negative part; *'Tis not burdensomness, nor every light suspicion of sin that can justify any Separation*; concerning the *burdensomness* we have spoken somewhat before, yet a word or two about the *suspicion*; *'tis not a light*, or however *not every light suspicion* that is but like the *dust of the balance* that will do it: really it was cunningly fenced! He expects perhaps that we should assert every light suspicion that weighs no more than a feather,

should be enough to justify a separation; Ay, but there are *violent presumptions*, which they say in some cases are admitted for good evidence. If I meet a person coming out of the house in a great rage with a bloody Sword in his hand, and immediately I enter in and find a person lying in his blood, I do assure you I shall not condemn myself for *lightness of belief*, or *easiness of entertaining suspicions*; if I suspect the man I met to have been the murderer; *light suspicions* may be as easily shook off as fastened on, and contemned as tendered: but it becomes no wise man to act against these *strong presumptions* of sin, which the Dissenters have of the imposed terms of Communion; And it will appear they are such as may make a hardy resolute person stand and pause before he rushes upon the practice.

1. They are sure that Christ is the perfect, and therefore the only Law-giver of his Church: had he not been the former, there had been no pretence he should be the latter: Now seeing these terms of Communion are Laws imposed upon the Church; they seem to impeach his wisdom that he saw not the fittest terms for his Churches to hold communion upon, they do reproach his care that he has not left Laws enough for his Church, and they seem to invade his Authority without any Warrant: all which things are enough to raise a suspicion (at least) of good strength in a wise mans breast, which none but a hardy spirit would act against.

2. They are sure that some of these conditions have been occasioned by and used in and with, and are suited and accommodated to the *grossest Idolatry* that ever was in the world, and is at this day used to give countenance to it: And they say that they are sure that God did *once hate Idolatry*, and so hate it as that he could not endure to be served in the Vessels, worshipt in the places, nor after the manner (in the most minute circumstances) that Idolatry was committed in; and therefore we have reason to suspect that the things required of us are displeasing to God: our using of them has emboldened Idolaters, and hardened them to go on without Repentance in the way of so great abomination: Nor have they been a Bridge, as we hoped, to bring them over to us, but a Boat to waft us over to them, they being more hardened by our retaining them, and some of our own made more wavering; thinking there can be no great difference between those Religions, where there is so great a Symbolizing in outward modes and Ceremonies.

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3. They are sure that *all uncommanded Worship is forbidden Worship*, and do think their time ill bestowed with him that shall deny it : All worship being part of that Homage and Service we owe to God, it will be impossible to guess what he will accept as such without Revelation : Now we are sure that the *Enquirer* owns the Liturgy to have been a *principal part of Worship* : and we are as sure that the Ceremonies are *part of the Liturgy*, and that which is a *part of a part*, is part of the whole ; nor can any man discern any difference between them and other things which are confessedly parts of Worship, and therefore they think they may with modesty say, there's ground enough for a violent suspicion of their sinfulness.

2. The affirmative part of his Assertion follows ; *It must be plain necessity or certainty of sin in compliance that can justify any separation* ; I should be glad to know what certainty of sin he will allow to justify a separation : does he expect a *Mathematical certainty* ? or only a *Moral assurance* ? If you ask an *Arithmetician*, says (*J. Martyr* in his Dialogue with *Trypho*) how many twice two will make ? he will answer you as often, four : and if I were asked a thousand times *what certainty of sin* were required to the suspension of my own act, I would as often answer, no more of necessity than that the thing does not appear to my best and impartial judgment to be *Lawfull*, separation is not necessarily a sin, there are as pregnant Commands for it, as prohibitions of it. It may be a *Duty*, and it may be a *Sin*, and why need we not as plain argument to prove that separation is not my duty ; as that it is not my sin ? Seeing it may be one as well as the other ? why now he arrests us with his Reasons.

§ 1. *Forasmuch* (says he) *as I cannot be discharged from a plain duty, but by an equal plainness of sin*. This Reason looks very prettily at first sight, and yet it demonstrates no more than a great good will to the cause : And, 1. 'Tis no more than a plain begging of the Question ; viz. That *Compliance* is a plain duty, *Schism* indeed is a plain sin, but separation is not plainly *Schism* ; It is a plain contradiction to the Assertion, but not a plain confutation of it, unless the denial of it in other words be a confutation. The business in short is this ; I suspect such *Compliance* is not my duty : and again, I suspect the terms of *Communion* are *sinfull*, and surely we may set *suspected sin*, as a Bar to what is but *suspected duty* at any time of the day ; let us a little compare things : that which he calls plain duty, is compliance



ance with such a Church as imposes things *unnecessary, burthensome and suspicious*: that which he calls *plain sin*, is refusing such compliance; now this, say I, is a plain begging of the Question, which is all the plainness in his Reason: First, to enquire whether such a separation or non-compliance be lawful, and then to suppose such Compliance to be plain duty. And then to assign this for the Reason, that nothing but equal plainness of sin can discharge me from a plain duty. 2. Dissenters do affirm that it is *as plain, nay more plain*, and if he will have it *so much more plain* a sin to practise the Ceremonies than to separate, for separation may be a duty in some cases, but the practising of such Ceremonies cannot be a duty in *any case*, on this side divine prescription: God has warranted separation in the General, but he has not so warranted Ceremonies.

§ 2. His second reason is, *And for this phrase, suspected; it is so loose and uncertain, that there's no hold of it; men will easily suspect what they have no mind to*: whether this word *suspected* be a phrase or no, I shall leave to the wrangling Grammarians, onely I am afraid in a while every small particle will be a phrase, where these Gentlemens occasions require it. *A suspected evil* is no such trivial thing in the Apostles Divinity, as the Enquirer would perswade us: to act in any case when we have not clear light into the Lawfulness of the action, is sin, and such a one as renders the actor obnoxious to eternal damnation: *He that doubts is damned if he eat*. And indeed to act against the restraint of our own judgment *though mistaken*, argues a mind prepared to act against our judgments, if they had not been *mistaken*: He that shall attempt to *clip the Kings Coyn*, may meet with a *plaited piece*, yet had it been *right stander'd*, he would have serv'd it no better: *that men will easily suspect what they have no mind to*, ought not to prejudice those who have *no mind to a thing*, because they suspect it to be evil. 'Tis *as easie for another to say that what men have a desperate love to*, they will never be brought to suspect its *sinfulness*. What wise man would suspect four or five hundred pounds *per Annum* to be *unlawfull*? our Inclinations naturally warp towards ease, and rest, and they that know no God but their mistaken selves, will own no Scripture but what is dictated from the inspiration of *fleshy Interest*. The Byass of nature draws us more to suspect the *Lawfulness* of that which being *unlawfull* would undo us, than to suspect

suspect that to be unlawfull, which being Lawfull would advance us.

And this may justifie all sober Dissenters, that they who condemn them are confessed to be to blame in clogging their Communion with unnecessary, burthensom and suspected conditions, and they who are condemned for suspecting it, to be as sinfull in them to obey, as it in others to command, and thereupon suspending their compliance, are either violently cast out of, or not admitted into communion. And this is your monstrous Schismatick.

And I am very confident that not onely the Scripture, but all Antiquity with the unanimous suffrage of the Reformed Churches will justifie and acquit that person of the guilt of Schism, who being found in the faith, holy in his life, earnestly pleading, and petitioning for Reformation, humbly desiring he may have Christs ordinances upon Christs terms, and yet being denied his Right shall make his applications to some other particular Church of Christ, where his admittance may be more easie, his continuance more certain and safe, his mind not distracted with suspicions about his own aetings, but his whole strength and spirits expended in the edification of his own soul in truth, holiness, and peace, which before were wasted in doubtfull disputations.

( 2. ) The second thing he will say is, *if the non-necessity of some of the terms of Communion be a warrant of separation, then there can be no such thing as Schism at all* : I doubt not but he intends that his argument shall proceed *à remotione Consequentis ad remotionem Antecedentis* : But there is such a sin as Schism, therefore the non-necessity of some of the terms of Communion is not a warrant of separation: there are many things I would answer to this argument: 1. That the whole Syllogism is troubled with an old malady called *ignoratio Elenchi*, for it is not half an hour ago since he undertook to prove that the Churches requiring indifferent, unnecessary, or at most suspected things would not excuse the person that should separate from the Guilt of Schism. Afterwards he put in burthensom into the Question: And now I perceive he would be glad to take Eggs for his money, if he could get them, and sit down content with this sorry conclusion, that the non-necessity of some of the Terms is no sufficient warrant of separation: which fault is an argument some call an Ignorance of the Question, but I call it a fighting with his own shadow, what if bare non-necessity

necessity alone, without burthensomness, or what if both these, without strong suspicion of sin will not warrant it, yet if all conjunct will do the feat, Dissenters will escape the *Hue and Cry* after Schism, and Schismatics. 2. I deny his Consequence: there might be, there would be Schism, too much Schism, though I confess not half so much as there is, though the non-necessity of the Terms were a good warrant of separation: If Schism lay in nothing indeed but *running away from a Church* ( as the vulgar error carries it ) he had come a little nearer the mark; but if we durst content our selves with the Scripture notion of Schism which includes those feuds, heats, intestine broils, those envyings, malignities, wherewith factious and bandying parties in the bosom of a Church do persecute each other, there might be as much Schism as almost the Devil could desire, and yet no separation: But let us hear his proof of the Consequence, *forasmuch* ( says he ) *as there never was, nor probably ever will be such a Church as required nothing of those in her Communion, but things strictly and absolutely necessary; Ergo what? why therefore if the non-necessity of some of the terms of Communion be a sufficient warrant of separation, there can be no such thing as Schism, pray forbear, there is a medium as I take it between non necessary, and strictly and absolutely necessary; I mean those things which being neither necessary in their own nature, nor made so by any positive Law of God in particular: yet by a concurrence of weighty circumstances serving under some General Command of God, do become at that time, and under those circumstances necessary, and these are those things wherein many Churches, I suppose, all Churches have at one time or other Exercised their power, now then though 'tis true that if the non-absolute necessity of the Terms of communion be a warrant of separation, there would be no such thing as Schism at all by unwarrantable separation from a Church, because perhaps there never was a Church that required nothing of those in her Communion but things absolutely necessary; yet it may be true, that the non-necessity of the Terms of communion may be a good warrant for separation, and yet there may be Schism enough in the world: for captious froward Spirits will be cavilling at, and dividing upon the account of those things which by a particular Church are required becoming necessary from circumstances: but to inform him a-right in this matter; Non-conformists do affirm, that whatever is made a condition of Communion, ought to have some kind*

of necessity in it or with it, antecedent to its imposition; and being made such a condition; still he is harping upon, and has great mind to prove what we are not concern'd to deny; but if he tempts to it, perhaps I may deny it, *That there was never, nor ever will be any such Church, &c.* And because I would entertain the Reader with a little of our *Enquirers* merriments, he shall hear his proof of the point.

1. He tells us *he has shewed us this partly in the Introduction*, and so pag. 2. For proof of the soundness of this Churches constitution, he posits us over to the Introduction, and when we come to turn over this Introduction, there's an honest well-meaning oration of something or other without proof. 2. *He could easily make it appear at large through all Ages*; well, then we will suspend our belief till his *Magdeburgensis* come abroad. 3. He will *save himself*, and the Reader the labour (of writing the Century's) very good! We are satisfied any way i'th world, he shall find us the most reasonable people in the world, if he will but abate us these unnecessary impositions: But which way shall we spare our pains? Oh thus! name one Church if you can that hath admitted of no other opinion or Rites, but such as have been absolutely necessary. And has this great mountain teemed this little mouse? He should have proved that never any Church in any age, in any Country, but had imposed things not absolutely necessary, and he like a modest man that can be content with a competency, proved onely that there never was any such Church but admitted such things: is there no small critical difference between admitting in the use and practise some things indifferent in an indifferent way, and imposing, requiring, and enjoying them as necessary Terms of Communion: I will make a fair motion; Let this Church admit of the use and practise of some things not absolutely necessary, yet neither in their nature sinfull, nor for multitude burthenfom, nor for abuse suspected, nor in their instituted use Sacramental, and yet not impose them as necessary conditions of Communion, and if there be less Uniformity, there will be a thousand times more unity, and true inward love, Evangelical tendernefs, and fraternal forbearance to compensate a little outward decorum, which perhaps is very Surprizing with women and children.

All this while I distrust not the Readers Acumen to see the Sophistry; He would make it out there's no Church which admits not some determinations, not strictly and absolutely necessary;

necessary ; and he would thence infer that there's no Church, but what *imposes* such not absolutely necessary determinations, and thence, that if non-necessary Terms of Communion be a warrant of separation, there can be no Schism in the world at all : whereas there are such things as being neither *unnecessary*, nor yet *absolutely necessary*, may be fit matter of agreement in Christian Societies, that they may be more steadily governed, more peaceably and inoffensively managed, the Ordinances more methodically and orderly administred, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of souls more effectually advanced.

(3.) The third and last thing he will say, is, that *some things are necessary to the Constitution and Administration of a particular Church, that are not in themselves necessary absolutely considered*: This he will say, and who can help it ? why will he say it ? why doubtless as a medium to prove his conclusion, or he had better have said nothing ; now that which he engaged to prove was this : That things indifferent, unnecessary, &c. imposed as conditions of Communion are not enough to Excuse the Person that separates, from a participation of the *sin of Schism* ; the Argument marches in this order : If some things are necessary to the Constitution of a Church, which are not absolutely necessary in themselves, then the Imposition of unnecessary terms of Communion is no excuse for Separation ; but the former is true, Ergo, so is the later ; or in short, if some things be necessary then, the Church may impose things not necessary : quod erat demonstrandum.

He has been told over and over again, that many things not necessary in themselves, may become necessary *pro hic & nunc*, but then they must be *thus qualified*, before they can be fit matter of a Churches determination. 1. They must be necessary one way or other, Antecedently in the Churches determination. 2. The necessity must extend as far as the determination : For if they become necessary to one particular Church, and not to another, it will not oblige the other Church to come under the Imposition, unless they come also under the necessity. 3. That when the necessity evidently ceases, the Imposition ought also to cease, and the Members of the Church may claim it of right to be relaxed of the burthen, and may re-assume their former liberty, which the present necessity did restrain. 4. Churches are not to feign necessities, and imaginary Exigences as an Engine of ambitious Spirits to try conclusions upon

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mens consciences, or practise upon their tameness, and therefore the necessity ought to be such as carries its own evidence along with it.

There are many things which the Divine Authority had determined as to its *kind and sort*, which yet are not so determined in the *individuals*; now when a Church meets with any of *these*, she must come to a determination, for otherwise the Divine commands cannot possibly be reduced into act, nor our Duty exercised: Thus he has commanded his Churches to assemble themselves together for publick worship, he has appointed them Ordinances wherein to receive mercy and grace from him, and Officers to administer the Ordinances in the Church, the Church therefore is obliged to doe whatsoever is necessary to the doing of her duty: Thus God having obliged them to worship, they must come to an agreement about the place, meerly because 'tis impossible to meet no where. But if the *divine will* hath not determined in *specie*, man cannot under the most specious pretence of decency, or adorning the worship, institute any thing, because it wants *some head of a Divine command*, to which to reduce it; Thus God having given no Command to any Church, to worship him under sensible forms, and signs of invisible Grace, no Church has power to institute any such, and worship God by them; For in this case Divine wisdom, love, and authority, have demonstrated themselves, and settled enow to answer God's ends and ours.

If he had said, as often as you baptize, besides the washing with water which I have commanded you, see that you make some figure over the face of the Person to be baptized, and not determined the figure, whether Hexagonal, Pentagonal, or the like, the Church must come to a conclusion about some figure, or the Duty must ever lye fallow.

But a general command, that *all things be done decently and in Order*, will never introduce these symbolical ceremonies, because the command may be satisfied without them, or any of them, they are not necessary so much as by *disjunction*; whatsoever is comprehended under a Divine Precept, is a necessary duty at least by disjunction, antecedent to any command of any Church; but these Ceremonies are not necessary in any sense antecedently to the command of a Church, and therefore are not comprehended under that general precept, *Let all things be done decently and in Order*; And indeed if they were, the sign of  
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the Cross would be a necessary Duty, not onely in or at Baptism, but in the Lord's Supper, in every Prayer, in all Preaching, in singing of Psalms, and in every Religious Exercise, seeing that precept enjoins all things to be done decently and in Order. And we may presume that our Saviour, with his Disciples and Apostles, performed all Divine Service in the most decent, congruous, and edifying Modes, and yet they never praised that, or any other ceremony of that sort; and therefore they are not comprehended under the Rule.

Nevertheless our Enquirer is resolved he will give us two instances of this Truth, that some things are necessary to the constitution and administration of a particular Church, that are not in themselves necessary absolutely considered: And if he thinks it worth the while, he may give two hundred, for we are perfectly unconcerned in them all.

(1.) The first instance is in the Apostles times: the abstaining from things strangled and blood was by the Council of Jerusalem adjudged and declared necessary to be observed by the Gentiles, in order to an accommodation between them and the Jews; and yet I suppose scarce any body thinks the observation of that Abstinence so enjoined necessary in it self: Let us apply it, either then the abstaining from Ceremonies must be adjudged necessary in order to an accommodation between our Church and other Protestants, or the observing of them be adjudged necessary in order to an accommodation between us and the Romanists; which he would chuse, I am not informed.

But let us examin a little his great Instance.

§ 1. It was adjudged and declared necessary to be observed (saies he.) Therefore (say I) it was enjoined, because first necessary, and not made necessary by the Injunction: The thing was not unnecessary before the Synodal Letters, nor the Council at liberty to have determined the contrary, unless an accommodation between Jew and Gentile was a thing unnecessary, Acts 15. 28. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burthen than those necessary things, *καὶ οὐδὲν ἑνὶ πείρασμός τίς ἐστιν*. Now let him try his skill to conclude a power to impose things unnecessary from this fact of theirs, who onely imposed things necessary.

§ 2. That a Council had the Immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost, and might more safely adventure upon such an Imposition, than any particular or National Church, who, as they have no promise, cannot in faith expect any such extraordinary direction; and we hope that no Church will assume equal Power to impose,



pose, unless they could produce equal Authority for their Power, in which the Consciences of Christians might securely acquiesce: It would be strange language from a Synod, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no other burthens than these necessary things*, that ye observe all Ceremonies of our appointment.

§ 3. The People might reasonably conform to that decree which had their own *antecedent consent*, and the more patiently bear the burthen, which was not imposed upon *them*, without themselves, for this Canon was not onely sent to the Churches by the Order of the *Apostles, and Elders, and the whole Church*, v. 22. but whatever obligatory power there was in it *from man*, it ran in the name of the *Apostles, Elders, and Brethren*; But, alas! the case is otherwise with the poor Churches in reference to Impositions of late Ages, who know no more what Impositions shall be laid upon their Consciences, then the poor Horse is acquainted whither his Master intends to ride him.

§ 4. This was a Decree, *not to burthen them*, but to *ease and relieve* them, not to pinch the Gentiles, but to discharge them of those servil loads which some Judaizing Converts would have imposed on them; we read, v. 1. *That certain came down from Judæa, which taught the Brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved.* And when Paul and Barnabas opposed this Tyranny, yet such was their Zeal for their old Ceremonies, that they re-inforced their scatter'd Squadrons from *certain of the Sect of the Pharisees who believed*, (v. 5.) saying, *That it was necessary to circumcise them, and command them to keep the Law of Moses*: At last the Case comes before the Council, and they determin against these Judaizing Bigots; That their blind Zeal should not be the measure of what was necessary, or unnecessary; and yet not to exasperate them, lest perhaps they might apostatize wholly from Christ, and relapse to Moses, (as they were in a fair way:) They determin to *lay no other burthen upon them but those* (really) *necessary things*; in opposition to those other, which the Jewish Brethren *falsly* pleaded to be necessary: so that they eased the burthen which some would by *Doctrin* have laid upon their shoulders, and onely charg'd them by their determination with what was *really necessary*.

§ 5. Let us consider the things imposed, v. 29. *Abstaining from meats offer'd to Idols, and from Bloud, and from things strangled,*  
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and from Fornication. Of which, Fornication was unlawfull in it self; By *Bloud* many Learned men understand *Murther*, which Opinion the Learned Dr. *Hammond* recites, and, as I remember, approves: As to the *not eating of things strangled*. It had contracted a very reverend and grave Countenance by its antiquity, being numbred among the seven Precepts of the Sons of *Noah*: And lastly, as for *meats offer'd to Idols*, under that notion it was, and is still, unlawfull.

§ 6. All this was for avoiding Scandal; The Morality of which Precept, had it been understood by the Raw Novice Professors of the Gentiles, it had taught them to abstain from a greater matter than *Bloud* or *things strangled*, (supposing them indifferent) that they might give no offence. And therefore whilst this Canon was in force, and the sharpest edge set on it, I question not but that the Gentile Christian might have eaten the *τὸ πρῖν* privately, or in company where no offence was taken, for what were the Jews concern'd what I should eat at home, either of the *μειδῖα*, fragments, or portions of the Sacrifices sent to me by the Heathen Relation, or of those things that were killed by suffocation: for thus was the end of the Decree attained, the Apostles satisfied, the Jews pleased, and Christian Liberty asserted and vindicated: But the case is otherwise with us; for such is the Holiness of a Cross, or Surplice, that if a Minister satisfied in their use; and yet convinced that they ought to know their distance, and give place to the Conscience of the weak, or if the strong, who is supposed weak in instance, shall omit them, he shall be liable to be reviled by the Author of the former part of the Enquiries, pag. 25. for an underminer of the Church, a debaucher of his Office, and wear not, and for want of a white garment, shall have a hole pick'd in his black coat, and suspended both *ab Officio*, & *beneficio*.

§ 7. Here was no penalty annex'd by way of sanction to this Decree. The Apostles contented themselves with that spiritual Power wherewith the Lord Christ had armed them: nor do we read that ever any were excommunicated about it, nor urged it as an indispensable condition of enjoying the ordinances of the Gospel.

§ 8. It appears from the Apostle *Paul*, that when this Decree had a little gratified a people tenacious of old usages, and humour'd them into some handsome compliance, it expired

red of course, (as to whatever obligation arose from the prohibition of things *in themselves* indifferent) and lay amongst the obsolete Canons not regarded, for when the reason of an Ecclesiastical Law ceases, the Law it self ceases, without any formal repeal; which some expecting should have been more solemn, conceive it in force to this day.

There is no question but those Churches who going off from the Dregs of *Rome*, finding their people both ignorant and obstinate, and extreemly averse to a through Reformation, did in prudence leave them some of their old little toies, till they should know better, and then they would throw 'em away of themselves; They that had suck'd in Popery with their Mother's milk, would be very peevish, and wrangle unmercifully to be weaned all at once: staid Nurses did therefore deal with them as they could bear, expecting when they should fall to more manly food: But seeing by this time they have either reach'd their end, or never will; and seeing the subtle enemy of Purity and Peace would pervert their ends, if they be permitted quietly to expire, and die of themselves, (which they would soon do, if not fetch'd again by their over-officious friends importunity) The Protestant Religion should have no cause to bewail their Funerals.

(2.) His second Instance is in *Church-government*. The short of it is thus much: That *some Church-government* is necessary, yet no particular form necessary. *As whether it ought to be Monarchical, or Aristocratical, Episcopal, or Consistorial*. This seems very dangerous Doctrin, for now it seems *Episcopal Government* is degraded of its old pretence to a *Jus Divinum*: And now the Presbyterian and Congregational forms stand upon even grounds with the Prælatial, saving wherein this last has got the advantage by *Law*. But here we are to understand that *his Text* and *his marginal reading*, *his Chethib* and *Keri*, do strangely vary, and it's like to cruciate our Rabbins to reconcile them; for *his Text* reads thus: *Few, or none, will affirm that either of these forms (Episcopal or Consistorial) are necessary*. But *his Margin* reads thus; *I do not mean to weaken the Authority and Reputation of Episcopal Government, which I sincerely think to be both best in it self, and Apostolical for its antiquity*: Thus the Author of the Introduction calls it, *the most primitive Government*. Now some will perplex themselves how to agree his *Scriptio* and his *Lectio*, the *Text* and the *Comment*: He tells, *The Episcopal Mode is not necessary,*

and yet he does it not at all to *weaken its reputation* ; though it has been *hitherto reputed* to stand upon a divine bottom by our Learned Churchmen ; but yet he *does not mean* any harm, Good man, no not he : but with such *good meaning* silly Souls use to palliate the irregular effects of gross ignorance. If a man should come to my house, and with his *Crows* and *Pickaxes* begin to belabour the foundation ; alarmed with the noise, I come out ; Friend ! what do you mean to weaken the foundation of my house ? I shall have the roof shortly come about my ears : *Oh Good Sir*, ( replies he, ) *I do assure you I have no meaning to weaken your house, or shake its walls, I sincerely think your house is the strongest house in all the Parish* : and to his work he falls again as hard as he can drive : A Declaration contrary to the Fact has no more credit with me then it needs must.

But this is not the worst on't, Here seems to be an irreconcilable contradiction. Episcopacy is *indifferent*, and yet *best in it self* : *Not necessary*, and yet *Apostolical*, and yet some think there was an absolute necessity of this quarrel between the Text and Margin ; The Margin was added to make the Text pass Muster, and if the one had not been a *Delector*, the other had miss'd of an *Imprimatur* ; The necessity of the argument required Episcopacy should be *a Thing indifferent* : but the necessity of pleasing *his Patron* required it should be *Best in it self* ; And in what a lamentable plight must a learned Author be, to gratifie such contrary demands ? Let him then agree himself with himself, whilst I examin his Reasonings.

*Church government is Necessary in the general* ; but *this or that form of Government, in particular, is not necessary*, ( *not absolutely necessary* ) therefore some things, *not necessary in themselves*, are, or may be necessary to the constitution or administration of a particular Church. This, if I greatly mistake not, is the whole strength of this Period. To which I answer in these particulars. ( 1. ) That though the Scripture does not trouble us with Terms of Art, Monarchical, Aristocratical, Democratical ; yet at least all the Officers belonging to the Church of Christ are there specially determined : And, from the nature of the Officers, the species, or particular form of the Government, will of necessity emerge ; If the Officers of the particular Churches stand upon equal ground one with another, the Government which results from thence will be Aristocratical : If there be an Imparity, and subordination of the Governors of one Church to another, the Government which results-

sults from thence will be *Monarchical*. And if the *Churches* governed by their respective Pastors are not knit together by some common bond, the Government will be denominated *congregational*. (2.) Supposing that the Government is onely commanded in the general, but the particular form not determined, yet this will never conclude, that the *Church* may impose such things as Terms of Communion which are not commanded in the general. It can never follow that a *Church* may institute and impose Ceremonies, for which there is no general warrant, because it must agree upon a Government, for which there is a General warrant: Nor that she may impose those things which are not necessary either to the Constitution or Administration of a *Church*, because she must determin upon that which is necessary both to the constitution and administration of it. (3.) He pretends to prove that it is unlawfull to separate upon the account of unnecessary Conditions of Communion, and he gives us an instance in *Episcopacy*, which yet his Margin affirms to be best in it self, and Apostolical for Antiquity: from hence we are instructed, That unnecessary conditions are such as are or may be best in themselves: And let him but produce such Terms of Communion as, being unnecessary in themselves, are yet best in themselves, and I am confident there will be an end of this Controversie: whereas therefore his Margin tells us, That this is *Argumentum ad homines*: he saies very true, it is so to himself and his friends. If Episcopal Government be best in it self, how will he thence conclude the *Churches* power to impose indifferent things, unnecessary things; which are not best in themselves? But if Episcopal Government be indifferent, and unnecessary in it self, how is it best in it self, and Apostolical for Antiquity? An indifferent thing, best in it self; An unnecessary Apostolical constitution, is a notion which sounds very harshly in my ears, and perhaps the most of our Readers.

But we are all tired out with these paralogisms, we have heard a great clamor of *Schism*, *Schism*, as the manner is, and when we come to enquire after the Reason, we are returned with a *nihil dicit*, or, which is all one, nothing to that purpose.

## CHAP. III.

*Of the Nature of things scrupled by Dissenters: Shewing that there is no necessity to sacrifice either Conscience or Truth to Peace, which may be purchased at lower rates, or else would be too dear.*

**I**T was my unhappiness to read of one; who, to an excellent Discourse of the Influence of Adam's Transgression upon the misery of mankind, made this Blasphemous return? *What a stir is here about the eating of an Apple?* Much what of the same Temper was that blustering Hector, Pope Julius the second; who being humbly advised by a Cardinal not to rage so immoderately for a Peacock, (which it seems was stoln) answered like himself, *God could be angry and plague the world for a sorry Apple, and shall not I much more for a delicate Peacock?*

When our Enquirer would persuade us, that the things in Controversie are of small Importance: Let me persuade him, that no Disobedience to God, or Treachery to our own Souls, can be little to those who understand the Majesty of the one, or the Worth of the other.

When the Compilers of our Liturgy shall plead on the behalf of the Ceremonies, that though the keeping or omitting of one, in it self considered, is but a small thing; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression of a common Order and Discipline, is no small Offence before God: I hope without offence we may affirm a little more of the least of Christ's Precepts; That little sins will find a great Hell.

It's the Solemn and Religious custom of those who would make their own Pleasures the supream Reason of their own Commands, and our Obedience; first, to flatter us, that the matter is inconsiderable, till we have submitted; and then, to threaten us with the sanction of those Commnds, as no less than *Eternal Damnation*, when violated.

But if he making the Things in Dispute a Sacrifice, would sacrifice our Enquirer, we are content they be immediately offered up as a *Holocaust*, to the Peace and unity of the Church, in those flames they have kindled: But he comes to explain himself. 'Tis not that the Ceremonies should become a *Burnt-Offering to Peace*; but that the Consciences of the Dissenters should be Sacrificed to the Ceremonies: or, which is more to his purpose, *their Persons Sacrificed*

to those *Touchy Deities*, (as he calls them) of *Custom and Vulgar Opinion*.

Those sins, which men count *small*, are therefore *great*, because their temptations are *less pressing*, and so being more easily avoidable, have less to plead in their Excuse, or Defence: But an *Imposing Spirit*, always turns *the wrong end of the Perspective glass*, which shrinks a Mountain into a Mole-hill, and a Bulky Minister, with all its Cathedral Appurtenances, into a *Chappel of Ease*, where twenty Nobles *per Annum* will not defray the Charges of a Ceremonious Conformity.

All things are Little or Great, as they serve the present occasion: *Little*, when their Imposing is vindicated; and *Great*, when the Neglect of them comes to be punished. *Little or nothing*, till the yoke is fastened on; and then *weighty*, when once their Conscience is shakell'd with Canonical Obedience.

The undoubted way therefore to settle a Righteous and a durable Peace, is to take *just Measures* of things: Not to keep one *Bushel*, by which to mete out *Impositions*, and another, by which to deal out *Censures*; neither on the account of Peace to Reneger any of *Gods Truths*; nor by unnecessary *Impositions* to disturb the Churches quiet.

And if men could be perswaded to set aside Passion, and those alluring baits to Empire over Souls, and calmly consider how mean (at the best) those things are upon which they lay the vast weight of our Concord, they would see Reason, not to perpetuate our Divisions, nor intail Quarrels upon innocent Posterity, who are not yet imbroyed in our Contentions; upon the account of those things, which the Church may well spare without any Eclipse of her Glory; part with without Impeachment of her Wisdom; leave free, without prejudice to the Worship, or just offence to any, to the unspeakable joy of all cooler spirits, besides the infinite satisfaction that would arise to our Brethren of the Reformed Religion beyond the Seas.

There are three things, which *the Enquirer* has propounded to himself to Treat of in this Chapter.

(1.) That *the Cause of Dissentions amongst us, are not like those upon which we separated from the Roman Communion*. We acknowledge it with all cheerfulness! Yet a man may die of many other Diseases besides the Plague. We Rejoyce that the Church of England has such clear grounds to justify her departure: And we wish we had fewer grounds to justify ours.



But here for the credit of his Discourse (wherein we are all equally concerned with himself) I could have wish'd he had not prefaced it with so foul and gross a slander: *It is said by some, that there is as much cause for Secession from this Church now, as there was from the Roman in the time of our Ancestors.* I onely demand so much Justice from the Reader, as to suspend his belief till this judicious Imputation be made good, and in the mean time, return thus much in Answer.

§ 1. There may be a *just Cause* where there is not an *equal Cause* of separation. There may be a great latitude in the terms of Communion, and yet all unjustifiable; and there may be great variety in the Reasons of separation, and yet all may be warrantable. Had the Pope's terms been much lower, they had been much too high for our Ancestors to come up to: And though the terms of this Church are lower then those of Rome, yet they are something too high for Dissenters, who humbly plead that they have just cause for a *peaceable Departure*, since they cannot *peaceably abide in the Society*.

§ 2. Upon our *Enquirer's* Principles, it had been as lawfull for our Ancestors to have continued in Communion with the Roman, as for Dissenters to conform to the present demands of this Church. For let me have a clear Answer, why *their private wisdoms* ought not to be sacrificed to the *publick wisdom* in Queen Mary's Reign, as our private wisdom resign to the publick under our present Circumstances? For in this case, we consider not the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of the terms as they are in *their naked selves*; but where the *final decision* shall rest, *whether they be lawfull or unlawfull*? Now the *Enquirer* tells us, page 168. *It's enough to warrant our obedience, that the thing is the command of the Superiour, and not beyond the sphere of his authority.* But who can measure the sphere of the Magistrate's Authority, unless we could take the just diameter of it? Again, page 178. *The Result of all will be, that instead of prescribing to the Magistrate what he shall determin, or disputing what he hath concluded on, we shall compose our minds and order our circumstances for the more easie and chearfull compliance therewith.* What Rivers of precious Bloud had this Doctrine saved, had it been broached in Queen Mary's days: That men must not dispute what the Magistrate has concluded on: And though he thinks to heal all this by saying, page 166. *That God has made the Magistrate a general Commission, and made no exception of this kind,* (meaning as far as Circumstantial, and those things that God himself

himself hath not defined) yet this will not solve the difficulty, because, 1. Who shall judge what is a *circumstantial*, and what a *substantial*; what an *integral part* only, and what an *essential part* of Religion? Where shall we lodge the determination ultimately, what God has defined and not defined? If the Magistrate! Then our Ancestors are gon by the Common Law. If the private Person, we are all in *statu quo*. 2. God has no where determined *circumstantials* from *substantials* in the Magistrate's Commission; for though our *Enquirer* has excepted the one, yet it is by his private Authority, which binds not the Magistrate: His Commission is *Patent*, and therefore it may be read. *Rom. 13. 1. Let every soul be subject to higher powers, &c.* This Commission does no more except an *Obedience*, then a *Circumstance*; he that will put in the one, may at pleasure insert the other; and he that will except the one, may and will except the other. So that I conclude, or at least see no reason why I may not; that according to this *Enquirer's* sentiments, had Providence allotted us our Habitations under a Prince of the *Roman* Communion, we might have practised all his Injunctions, without warrant to plead our Consciences in Bar; which Principle will bear a man's charges through all the *Turk's* Dominions, and make any man a free Citizen of *Malmsbury*, when once Conscience is sacrificed to the Deity of *Leviathan*.

Every true Protestant will gladly read his Justification of this Churches departure from *Rome*: And therefore though it be not much to the matter in hand, I shall not grudge to go a little out of my way with him for his good Company and profitable Discourse.

1. *We could not (saies he) continue in the Roman Church upon any better Conditions, then Nahash propounded to the men of Jabesh Gilead, to put out our right eyes, that we might be fit for their blind devotion. Whether the eye be put out that it cannot, or hood-winck'd that it may not see, is no such considerable difference; but we have the less need of a private, if there be a publick eye that can see for us all, and better discern the fit Terms of Communion: And whether it be the right eye, or the left, or both, that our Enquirer would pluck out of our heads I cannot tell: for when we have considered with the best eyes we have, whether it be our duty to withdraw from the present establishment in some things, and the result of our most impartial inquiries, concludes in the affirmative, yet we are Schismaticks, and all that*

that is naught ; if then we may not see with our own eyes, as good pluck them out.

They that fancy man be but an *Automaton*, a well contrived piece of Mechanism, have certainly fitted him to this Hypothesis: For suppose him to be like a Clock, which once put in motion, will jog on the round, and drudge through the Horary circle, and perform you a twelve hours work, in twelve hours time without attendance, or other charge than a little Oyl? and you may then set him to what hour you please. And he shall as freely strike twelve at Sun-set, as Mid-day.

2. *We must not here have renounced our Reason*, What if we had? Our own private Reason is not worth so much as to contend with the publick: and thanks be to God, that our Governours are counselled by their own Reasons; for had they been guided by the Counsels and Interests of such Divines, we must have renounced ours too long ago.

3. *That Church in lieu of the Scriptures gives them Traditions*: Nay, do not wrong the Grave Tridentine Fathers; it was but *Pari pietatis affectu veneramur*. The Church of England abhors indeed that Sacrilege, in her 34 Article. *Whoever through his private judgment willingly and purposely doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to Gods word, ought to be rebuked openly*: And I am confident the Roman Church will allow us openly to break any of hers, when she shall confess them to be repugnant to the Word of God.

4. *Instead of such things as were from the Beginning, it prescribes those things that had their beginning from private Interest, and secular Advantages*: It has been a piece of policy of our Duellers to escape the Laws, to cross the Channel, and fight it out upon Callice Sands: If our Enquirer will go with me thither I would dispute it fairly with him, whether the Terms of Communion be the same that were from the beginning? If the Church of Rome be warrantably deserted, because her matters stand not in the Primitive posture: They that can make the plea, will expect the same privilege. The learned Author of the *Irenicum*, p. 121. assures us, that it is contrary to the practice and moderation then used, to deprive men of their Ministerial functions for not conforming in Habit, Gestures, and the like: and he adds his pious wishes: That God would vouchsafe to convince the Leaders of the Church of this Truth. It will be less material therefore, whether the things so stiffly insisted on, had their beginning from private Interest and secular Advantages,

antages, for if they were not from the beginning, is't little to us where they had their rise.

The Canons of 1640. leave bowing towards the Altar indifferent, and prohibit Censuring and Judging : Extend but the same Moderation to all other things as far from the beginning as they, and of no greater importance, or confine them to Cathedrals as Organs once were, where they that have little else to do, are at more leasure for such operous services ; and we shall be secure as to Schism, which the Enquirer will certainly yield to, since he equalizes that sin to the most horrid crimes of Idolatry, Murther and Sacriledge.

5. They make seven Sacraments. And at our Enquirers Rates may make seven score : What is a Divine Sacrament, but an outward visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof : And let him define a humane Sacrament more appositely if he can. Then an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace ordained by man himself, as a means whereby we receive the same grace. And wherein does a Mystical Ceremony come short of this Description, whose declared end is, To stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he may be edified. Nor is there any thing wanting but the Royal assent, the Divine stamp of authority to make it a Sacrament, as accomplished at all points as those which are declared Generally necessary to salvation. And if the Papalins erroneously judge their five ordained of God, and we confess ours are not so ; all the difference is this ; That they are mistaken, and act proportionably to their mistake, and we see better, and yet act disproportionably : But the truth is, many of their most learned Writers freely own their five Sacraments to be no more than Ecclesiastical Traditions and Mystical Ceremonies ; such as the Sign of the Cross, though to set them off to the eye, they honour them with the august title of the Sacraments: Thus Petrus à Soto. *Omnes illæ Observationes sunt Traditiones Apostolicæ, quarum principium, author & origo, in sacris Scripturis inveniri non potest. Cujusmodi sunt, Oblatio sacrificii Altaris, unctio Chrismatæ, invocatio Sanctorum, Orationes pro defunctis, totum Sacramentum Confirmationis, ordinis, Matrimonii, Pœnitentiæ, Unctionis extremæ, Merita Operum, necessitas satisfactionis, enumeratio peccatorum facienda sacerdoti.* We are to account all those Observations, Apostolical Traditions, whose Beginning, Author and Origin,  
are

are not found in the Holy Scriptures: Such as are the Oblation of the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Anointing with Chrism, Invocation of Saints, Prayers for the Dead: The whole Sacrament of Confirmation, of Orders, of Matrimony, of Penitance, of extreme Unction, the merits of Good Works, the necessity of satisfaction, and Auricular Confession.

6. They have taken away one of the ten Commandments, and have Arts of evacuating all the rest: and why may they not evacuate the second, as well as our Author the fourth Commandment? all were equally promulgated in Mount Sinai, all have the same signature of Divine Authority, and he that can make Schism equal to Idolatry, may when he sees his time, throw off the second as he hath done the fourth for a piece of Judaical Superstition.

7. They have brought in Pageantry instead of Piety and Devotion, effaced the true lineaments of Christianity, and instead thereof recommended and obtruded upon the world the dictates of Ambition, the artifices of gain. He may safely talk his pleasure at this distance; though it would not be so prudent to preach this Doctrine where the Popes great Horse sets his foot: all the use I shall make of it is this little. That if the Introduction of Pageantry instead of Piety and Devotion be a good warrant to justify our Separation from Rome, let them judge (who have to do with it) whether it were Felony to remove a mans Quarters ten miles from some Cathedrals.

8. Lastly, (says he) these things could not be submitted to without grievous sin, and manifest danger of Damnation: No! now observe how the Romanist will belabor him with his own Cudgel, p. 122. It's the custom of those that have a mind to quarrel, to aggravate, and heighten the causes of Discontent, to the end that the ensuing mischief may not be imputed to the forwardness of their temper, but to the greatness of the provocation. And passion is such a magnifying glass, as is able to extend a Mole-hill to a Mountain: If men would be persuaded to lay aside their Passions, and calmly consider the Nature of those things that they divided from the Catholick Church upon, they would be so far from seeing Reason to perpetuate the Schism, that they would on the contrary be seized with wonder and indignation that they have been imposed upon so far as to take those things for great deformities, which upon mature consideration are really nothing worse than Moles, which may be upon the most beautifull Face: But the Reader will easily see that these are nothing but some ill gathered shreds out of your *Formulo Oratorie*, or *Clarks Transitions*, which will fit Protestant or Papist, and indeed any School-Boy that has a Theme, or Declamation to compose.

That

That the causes of Separation from the Church of *Rome* were pregnant, every way clear and evident, we do therefore agree: and that the Reasons of Separation from the Church of *England*, are not so great, but then neither is the Separation so great; for as we agree in the Fundamental Articles of Religion, so we may quickly agree in all the rest, when some of a more fiery temper will let their Mother alone to exercise to all her Children such an Indulgence as is agreeable to their various measures of Light in lesser concerns. But (says our Author) *It's quite otherwise in the Church of England.* For,

1. *No man here parts with his Faith upon Conformity*; But I am afraid they must part with it, or they will hardly be accepted. Their Faith is, that the Lord Christ is the only Law-giver of his Church; that the Scriptures are the adequate and commensurate Rule of all Religious Worship, and if they do not part with thus much of their Faith, they must live in a contradiction to it; but perhaps he may understand their Faith better than they themselves.

2. *No man is bound to give away his Reason for Quietness sake*: Then I know who was mistaken, p. 64. who tells us. *That since the Peace of the Church often depends upon such points as Salvation does not, and since in many of those every man is not a competent Judge, but must either be in danger of being deceived himself, and of troubling others, or if necessity must trust some body else wiser than himself, she recommends in such a case, as the safer way for such private persons to comply with publick determinations.* And we may assure our selves of our Enquirers good Nature in this particular, who condemns *Virgilius* for asserting the *Antipodes*, though it were demonstrably true, and the contrary impossible. And then I am afraid we must sacrifice our Reason to Peace, and rather subscribe like *Brutes*, than run the risque of being persecuted like *Men*.

3. *A man may be as holy, and good as he will.* The goodness and holiness of a Christian lies very much in using *Holy Means* for *Holy Ends*; God's holy Ordinances, in order to Holiness in the habit and complexion of the Soul: He that may not use the means of Holiness when he will, may not be as holy as he will, but as Holy as he can without them: He that will use all the means of God in order to that great end, it may possibly cost him more than he would willingly lose for any cause but that of Righteousness: Methought it was an odd sight to other day to see a Grave Divine in his Canonical Habit, marching with

with a brace of Informers piping hot on either hand, the one like the *Gizzard*, the other the *Liver* stuck under the wings of his Sacerdotal Habilitments, from one of his Rectories to the other, to give disturbance to a company of poor Innocent People that would have been a little more Holy if they might; when this is reformed, I'll believe that the more of Holiness appears, the better Churchmen we are reputed.

4. This Church keeps none of her Children in an uncomfortable state of darkness; for we must know that there's a two-fold estate of darkness, a comfortable, and an uncomfortable estate: Now the comfortable estate of darkness lies in trusting others, submitting our private to the publick wisdom; this is that blessed state whereinto he would wish his best Friends: But the uncomfortable estate is, that Remedy which is practised in Spain and Italy for the cure of Church-Divisions. An excellent Remedy it is, but it comes too late to do any good here: The difference between them was observed before, either to be born blind, or made blind, to have no Conscience, or prohibited to exercise it; to have no Eyes, or not to use them; and in my private opinion there's no great comfort in either of them.

5. She debars none of her Members of the Comfort and Priviledges of Christs Institutions. Somethat have struggled with a doubting Conscience, have attested the contrary; but however she may possibly debar some of those Priviledges and comforts, that would have been her Members, because they dare not give the price she rates those priviledges and comforts at.

6. She recommends the same Faith, the same Scriptures, that the Protestants are agreed in: Yes! but then she recommends those Ceremonies to boot, in which Protestants neither are, nor ever will be agreed in.

We do therefore seriously triumph that the Church of England with the Protestants are also fully and perfectly agreed, that they have not onely the same God and Christ, but the same Object of Worship too, (though I know not wherein God and the Object of Worship differ) the same way of Devotion in a known Tongue, the same Sacraments, the same Rule of Life, which are all the great things wherein the consciences of men are concerned. To which I shall need to say no more, but that we in the general profess our owning of all these, and yet our differences be very considerable, but let our consciences be concerned about no other: no other Sacraments, no other Rule of Life, no other



ther Devotion, and what is necessary to reduce all these into practice, and I can assure him Dissenters will flock apace into the bosom of the Church.

He promises us now that he *will faithfully and briefly recite the matters in difference*. And I confess for *brevity*, he has performed his promise well enough, but for his *Fidelity*, the Dissenters sadly complain of him : I shall therefore crave the liberty to use a little more *prolixity*, and I shall endeavour to compensate it with much more *Fidelity*, to reciting the material points wherein we differ.

As § 1. Whether a Minister Ordained according to the appointment of the Gospel to the exercise of *the whole Ministerial work*, may without sin consent, that a main part of his Office be statedly and totally taken out of his hands, and his work cantoned at the will of another ?

§ 2. Whether any Church has power from Christ to appoint in, and over it self, or Members, any Officers specially distinct from those Christ hath ordained ?

§ 3. Whether any Church hath authority from Christ to institute any other Ordinances of fixed and constant use in the Church than Christ hath instituted ?

§ 4. Whether it be an apparent Invasion of, and open reproach to the Regal office of Christ, for any Society of his to institute either new Officers or new Offices, for the governing and administering that Society, which the Head hath not allowed ?

§ 5. Whether it be not the Duty of every particular Church to conform all the Worship, and administration of Religion to the Laws of their Institution ? And that whatever is not so conformed, be not a corruption, which ought to be reformed by those Laws ?

§ 6. Whether if a Church shall peremptorily refuse to remove such Officers, Offices, Ordinances superadded to the Evangelical Law : A person that shall separate from its Communion in those things wherein it refuses to reform, may without breach of charity be called a Schismatick ?

§ 7. Whether a Christian may act against the superseding Dictate of his conscience, and may give it up to be ruled by an imaginary publick conscience.

§ 8. Whether, seeing we have the unerring word of God  
to

to guide us, to be mislead by our Leaders is a good counter-security against the Judgment of God ?

§ 9. Whether it be lawfull to break the least of Scripture Commandments to purchase our Quiet with men, or secure our own Repose in the world ?

§ 10. Whether the command of my Superiour will justify me in murdering the Soul of my weak Brother, when I may avoid giving the scandal in things indifferent ;

§ 11. Whether can the command of a Superiour make that no sin, but a duty ; but without that command, had been no duty, but sin ?

§ 12. Whether a Minister of the Gospel may submit to have his Prayers and Sermons composed for him by others, and whether he be a Minister at all, who is not able in some measure to discharge both to Edification ?

§ 13. Whether a Christian may without sin wholly and perpetually suffer his Christian Liberty to be determined one way, though under future circumstances, it may be the command of God for a season to determine it the other way ?

§ 14. Whether a Christian, willing to subscribe to all that Christ has propounded to him to believe, and to engage solemnly to do all that Christ requires him to do, and not contradicting such engagement by conversation, arguing him of prevalent Hypocrisie, but having given good proof before men of his Holiness, ought to be denied Christian communion ?

§ 15. Whether upon such tendries made, and their refusal, onely because he will not submit to new Terms of communion not approved by the Word of God, he shall adjoyn himself to some other particular Church, where the Doctrine of Christianity is purely preached, the Sacraments duly administered, and the conditions of enjoying all these, and other the Ordinances of Christ, honourable and easie ; such Departure from the one, and conjunction with the other, be that Schism noted in the Scripture ?

§ 16. Whether any Church hath power to advance indifferent things above their indifferent natures, and make them Holy in their use and relation, appropriated to Gods immediate Worship, and impose them as the Terms of exercising the Ministerial Office ?

§ 17. Whether

§ 17. Whether any Church hath power to institute new dedicating and initiating signs and symbols, whereby persons are declared and professed to be visible Christians?

§ 18. Whether, being clearly convinced by the Word of God that there are Corruptions in a particular Church whereof I am a Member; I ought not to endeavor in any place and station lawfully to reform them: And if a prevailing number in that Church shall not only refuse to reform, but require of me to renounce all such lawful endeavors, upon pain and peril of casting out of Communion; I may not wave the society of the corrupt Majority, and adhere to the more sober and moderate party who will reform themselves?

(2.) His second task is to prove that *something must be forgiven for peace*. The design of this loose Discourse may be reduced to this Argument. Small matters though truths, or duties, are to be sacrificed to Peace: But the things that Dissenters stick and boggle at, are such small matters, therefore they ought to be sacrificed to Peace. To which I only say at present; That I modestly deny both his Premises, and do hope he will as modestly deny the Conclusion. And perhaps some Sawcy Fellow or other will take up the Argument, and give it one turn. Small matters that are indifferences ought to be sacrific'd to Peace, but the things imposed upon Dissenters (in the judgment of the Imposers) are small indifferent things, therefore they ought to be sacrificed to Peace; or thus, Those things which we account little, we ought not to make necessary to Peace and Union, but the things which are in difference, are in our own account little, therefore we ought not to make them necessary to Peace and Union.

Something then we would give for Peace, and more then we can modestly speak of: If it were to be had for Money, we should not think that *Gold* could buy *Peace* too dear, though *Truth* may.

But may we humbly enquire of the *Enquirer*, whether he have this Peace to sell? And at what rates it may be purchased? I have *Carefully*, not to say *Curiously*, perused his whole Discourse; and I must confess to the Reader, that I am so far from understanding how the Market goes, that I suspect he knows not his own Mind. Page 131. He tells us: *We must be at some cost to purchase it, and part with something for it.* Well! but what is *that something*? Will Petitions, Supplications, Prayers, Humbling our  
P selves

selves at his footstool procure us Peace? No! That *something*,  
 is *nothing*: Men are not so mad, as to part with such a rich Com-  
 modity as Peace, for an old song of Petitions. What is it then?  
 Oh! pag. 130. He told us from *Erasmus*, That Peace was not too dear  
 at the price of some Truth. Very good! Will then telling half a  
 dozen round lyes procure us our Peace? or the renouncing half  
 a score Scripture-truths, or so? Oh but we are commanded to  
 buy the Truth, not sell it: Not to do evil that good may come. And besides  
 that Peace will never wear well nor last long that is purchased  
 with the loss of Truth. To war with God, or skirmish the scrip-  
 ture, is no approved method to secure Peace amongst our  
 selves. Well then, pag. 132. He tells us we must subdue our  
 passions and castigate our heats: And I think we have had pretty good  
 Coolers; then we must take in our Sails, lighten the Ship, cast over  
 board the Fardles of our private fancies and opinions: And we are Con-  
 tent to cast overboard any thing that is purely our own; onely  
 if any of the Rich Lading of Truth should be packt up in those  
 Fardles, we humbly pray that may be spared: if our own pri-  
 vate personal Concerns were onely called for, he should find  
 the Non-conformists as one man; saying, *sin autem Jonas ille ego sum,*  
*projicite me, in Mare ut tempestas deserviat*: Pray throw us into the  
 Sea, onely do not throw any concern of Christ, nor Reforma-  
 tion after us: Well! then he would have us offer something to  
 those touchy Deities of Custom and Vulgar Opinion. But really these are  
 a Couple of such Insatiable Idols, it were cheaper to starve  
 them, then feed them; we may Maintain Bell and the Dragon  
 at as easie rates: What is it then we must part with for Peace?  
 At last it comes out with much ado; Loth to confess till  
 just turning off the Ladder, for these are his last words under  
 this head, pag. 137. *In a word, that we part with all that which is no essen-*  
*tial point of our Religion, for Charity which is.* I am heartily sorry  
 that Peace is not to be had upon easier terms! But especially  
 that Charity, a Lady of so much Debonaireté, that seeks not her own,  
 much less to rob another, that uses not to look so Big, and  
 stand upon Terms; should enflame the Reckoning: It is not,  
 it cannot be Charity, I know her Temper too well; that requires  
 Conscience or Truth should be sacrificed upon her Altar: A true  
 friend she is to Truth, and no less to Peace, and will wait on  
 her *usque ad Aras* and no further. No! It's the Tyrian Idol  
 Moloch that old Canibal and blood sucker, that delights in Hu-  
 mane Carnage; For thus we read in *Q. Curtius*, that when they  
 were

were in a great freight. *Sacrum quod quidem Diis minime Corde esse Crediderim, jam multis seculis intermissum, repetendi quidem Autores erant,* which we may accommodate in the Translation thus, *Some there were that persuaded the State to revive an old and obsolete Statute, which since the time of Ancient Persecutions had lyen Dormant, and to Sacrifice Freeman to the Common safety; but for my part, though you count me a Heathen Writer; I can never believe, according to those notions I have of the Gods, that such Cruelties were ever acceptable to their Deities.* I would have Peace upon any terms that are Reasonable, but to part with all that in Religion, which he shall say is no essential part of it, is a very hard Chapter. We may chop off a mans legs, Arms, put out his Eyes, cut off his Nose, and yet though thus miserable dismembered and mangled in his Integrals, his essential parts, Body and Soul remain: Thus he may cut off even what he pleases of Religion, all worship, all Sacraments, all Discipline, and leave us but Faith, Hope and Charity, there's as much as is essential to our Salvation, and then dispose of the rest.

To this, or some other, or no purpose at all he quotes us *Greg. Nazianzen*, who asks us this Question: *τίτῃ ἡμετέρῳ λόγῳ καλλίον;* What's far more beautiful than our own Reason? And he answers: *Εἰπὴν σε διδῶν ὃ ὅτι καὶ λυσσιπλίσαν.* Nay I will add, the most profitable too. We were made to believe, page 126. That no man (in England) is bound to give away his Reason for quietness sake: But now four pages further, Peace is far more beautiful and useful than our own Reason: How shall we reconcile these crosscapers? Why, *Qui bene distinguit, bene respondet.* Then he was commending the Moderation of the Church of England in opposition to Rome. How that Imperious Lady that sits on the seven Hills, Hectors the World out of their Reason, and Common Sense; and then Reason is more precious than Peace; but now he's arguing the Nonconformists into obedience, and then Peace is more precious than Reason.

To the same purpose he gives us that excellent counsel of the Apostle, *Rom. 12. 18. If it be possible, as much as in you lyes, live peaceably with all men.* Admirable advice it is, God grant us grace to take it. And truly the Non-conformists can live peaceably with all the world, if they might be let alone, but its not in their power to prescribe Terms to others, but to receive them. *Leges à victoribus dari, à victis Accipi,* said *Cæsar*: If then reasonable Terms be offered us, we will accept, and love them: If unreasonable, we will refuse, and love them. If we be taken into the circle of their Charity, we will love them; if we be

excluded, yet still we love them : *Amabo & si Nolis , Amabo & si Nolim ipse*. We will love whether they will accept our love, and thank us for it or no : Nay we will love them whether our own exasperating sufferings will persuade us, or no; that is, we will follow them with a Christian affection, in spite of their teeth, and of our own. But this *εὐφροσύνη*, to live, converse peaceably, perhaps may be Impossible, and the Apostle we see will not tye us up to Impossible : Now sinful Conditions create a Moral impossibility; for *id tantum possumus quod jure possumus*.

I confess it cost me a Smile when I read his improvement of the Apostle's exhortation. Surely (saies he) he did not mean we should onely accept of Peace, when its offered us for nothing, or be quiet till we can pick a quarrel, but that we should be at some cost to purchase it, and part with something for it : The old something still ! Why, we are willing to part with all our outward Concerns, we will give skin upon skin, will neither God's Terms, nor the Devil's please him ? Onely we would not part with our Consciences intrusted from the Scriptures, the Sovereignty of Christ, the Perfection of the written Word; and is all this Nothing ?

But still he's at it again---we must deny our selves something upon that account. Why, we will take an Oath in the presence of Almighty God to lead quiet and peaceable Lives, as become good Subjects, in all Godliness and honesty; Will that serve to purchase our Peace? No! It must be something else, which before he acquaints us with, he will first prove the necessity of it; and thus he Reasons.

There are hardly (says he page 131.) any two persons perfectly of the same apprehensions, or stature of understanding in the whole world. So much difference there is in mens Constitutions, such diversity of Education, such variety of Interest, and Customs, and from hence so many prejudices and various Conceptions of things, that he that resolves to yeild to no body, can Agree with no body. What now is to be done in this perplexed Case? Must we take our Constitutions in pieces? I doubt we shall never put them right together again; or must we have no Peace till all the propensities and inclinations, rooted and riveted in our Beings, Natures, Temperaments, besides that second Nature growing out of Custome; be stormed? The Terms of Peace will be next too desperate this way. What then, must the prevailing party commit a Rape upon the Intellectuals of the depressed Minority, and Marry them afterwards to make them amends : Yet still there is a Tower called

*Assent and Consent*, can never be forced by assault: What then, must the lesser number openly profess themselves Convinced, and make Recantations before they have cause for't? Alas this is but to Profelyte a few Hypocrites, who are not worth the whistling! Or must we tarry till we come to Heaven, where we shall be of one mind? Oh our *Enquirer* is not satisfied in that point to Plerophory, some think so indeed; but he wisely keeps his faith to himself. What course must we then steer: Why we must castigate our heats, take in our sailes, lighten the ship, and offer sacrifice to the touchy Deities of received Custome and Vulgar Opinion, with all the fine stuff you heard before: But surely there's an easier, cheaper, more honourable and Christian way then all these put together: To bear with one another, to leave judging, censuring, despising, persecuting; to leave men to those Sentiments wick they have contracted from insuperable weakness, or less happy Education, whilst they are good men, good subjects, good Christians, sound in the Faith, and Worship God no worse then the Scripture commands them. And he that cannot Indulge his brother found in the Fundamentals, and walking together with his brethren so far as he has attained, let him prate of Peace till his Tongue akes, 'tis evident he would not purchase Peace with Shoo-buckles.

The Apostle has recommended this expedient to us by his own example, 1 Cor. 9. 20, 21. which the *Enquirer* could see to quote, and not to understand. *Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; To them that were without the Law as without Law (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without the Law; To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak, I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* It seems the Blessed Apostle had not yet learnt to snickle the private Conscience, with his publick Authority.

That which he quotes from *Greg. Naz.* is indeed more considerable to his design: Who affirms how *St. Basil* dissembled the Coessentialty of the Holy Ghost, and delivered himself in Ambiguous Terms on that point, lest he should offend and lose the weak. The Reader will conclude by these instances that though the *Enquirers* design lye open to condemn the Dissenters, yet his Mediums do strongly plead their Cause: We are illustrated with an Apostle, with a famous Bishop, both eminent for their Condescensions to the weak, such as laid not the stress of the Churches Peace upon their own Wills, or Apostolical power, or Ecclesiastical



Authority, nor defined too severely Controverted points; and yet when he comes to the Application, the duty of yielding is pressed upon the Dissenters: Whose coming up in a hundred points were perfectly insignificant unless they could nick the very *ἀναβολή* of Canon-Conformity. I would ask the *Enquirer* whether the Dissenters ever pleaded to be gratified in so weighty a point as the *Coesentiality of the Holy Spirit*? Or whether ambiguity, or a handsome equivocation there, must be one of those things we must give for Peace: If neither of these, he might have spared Basil, if not for our sake, yet for his own. And out of all these excellent materials we expected he should have composed a Speech to the Reverend Bishops.

My Lords! I have humbly set before your discerning Judgments the great Example of the Great S. Basil, and the greater instance of the famous Dr. of the Gentiles, persons, whose Authority in the Church, and wisdom to manage that Authority, was (without disparagement) equal to the same Qualifications in your Lordships; and yet their hearts so humble, when their places were so high, their condescensions greater than their exaltations, carries somewhat in it of that Divinity which bespeaks your imitation. They would become all things to all men, though sin to none; they were ambitious to win the weak by Meekness, and not to wound the weak by Majesty. The way of Peace lies plain before you, stoop to them in things Indifferent, who cannot rise to you in what they call sinfull, your yielding to the weak will be your strength. And whilst you gain tender Consciences to the Church, you will gain Immortal honour to your selves. Let it be the Glory of your Lives, you have made up our Breaches, and not the Epitaph of your tombs; That the way of Peace you have not known.

He comes now to the Grand example indeed, that of our Blessed Saviour, which if it be but faithfully alledged, and congruously applied, must silence all dispute, and conquer the most stiff reluctancy: Let us then hear how Christs Example leads us to Conform.

1. *Christ complied with the Rites and Customs he found*; what, right or wrong? 'Tis true! he complied with those he found, because he found such Rites and Customs as were warranted by the Law. He was circumcised. True, it became him to fulfil all righteousness. He did eat the Passover. Very true! He was made under the Law. He wore their Garments, spoke their Language. No doubt of it; He was a Jew by birth, and approved himself a Minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God.

2. He

2. *He condescended to the very humours of that stubborn people.* True! Not by imitating them, not assuming the person of a Jewish Zealot, but mildly reproving their irregularities; he came not in the blustering Whirlwind, nor in the terrible Earthquake, but in the still, small voice of Evangelical meekness. He came not to break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax; but rebuked his mistaken Disciples, that they understood not the spirit of the Gospel, nor what a temper it called for, that they must needs fetch fire from Heaven to consume the truly Schismatical Samaritans; when they should rather have castigated their own heats, and calmed their own passions, which were kindled from a worse fire: I expect still how he will accommodate this condescension of our Blessed Saviour to his purpose; for either the Dissenters must be those stubborn People, and then if the Clergy will imitate their Lord and Master, they must condescend to their very humours; or else Dissenters must in imitation of Christ condescend to the Clergy, and then it supposes them to be the stubborn and inflexible Party. Besides condescension in inferiours to Superiours, will be very improper language.

3. *He used their phrase in his discourse.* And the Non-conformists speak as proper English as their wit serves them, that they cannot adorn their conceptions, or clothe their thoughts in thunder-thumping Phraseology, may perhaps be their misery, but certainly not their sin.

4. *He observed their Feasts.* We question it not; He came to do his Fathers Will, and amongst other particulars, that also of observing whatever Ordinance was of Divine Institution: But the Reader must know, here's a secret Argument coucht in these words against Non-conformity, which I will ingenuously own, and 'tis this: The Jews had instituted a Feast in memory of the dedication of the Temple. Now this festival had not the character of Divine Institution, and yet this feast our Saviour solemnized, and who then can be so refractory as not to observe the Holy-days, and consequently all other human Constitutions, which bear no direct repugnancy to the Law of God? I shall neither assert at present that this Festival had Divine warrant, nor deny that it was properly of a Religious nature, but this I return, That it appears not that our Saviour performed any Act, or spoke any Word, that may be interpreted or construed an approbation of that practice. All that appears is from John 10. 22, 23. *And it was at Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication,*

and it was winter, and Jesus walked in Solomon's Porch: how shall we draw in Christs conformity from these words, it was winter? Ergo, Jesus approved the Feast. He walked in Solomon's Porch; Ergo, he condescended to that usage: The business was no more than this; *Christ went up and down doing good*, and seeking all occasions for that great end of his coming into the world: where most Fishes were, there he threw his Net; where the greatest confluence of people were gathered, there he preached; he took them where he could find them; they would not come to him, he would go to them: whatever was the lawfulness of that Feast, or, the occasion of their Assembly, Christ could make a holy advantage of it, to preach the Gospel for their Salvation.

5. *He made his own Institutions of Baptism and the Lords Supper as consonant to their Customs as 'twas possible.* A notable Instance it was of his condescension, if it was but true; but I am afraid we shall not be so happy as to see clear evidence of it, which is therefore to be lamented, because our Enquirer will miss an advantage of charging Dissenters with Judaizing in the Sacraments. But I will promise him thus much; when Non-conformists have a commission from heaven to institute Sacraments, they shall, if I can prevail, make them *as consonant to all honest Customs as 'tis possible*; but till then I hope he will not be displeased that we regulate all our customs by Christs commands, and not warp his commands to our customs.

6. *He would not disturb them with Novelty, but ingratiated himself and his Doctrine by these compliances.* I have but one Answer to these Objections. Let him be imitated. Let all that profess the Name of Christ, so far evidence the sincerity of their profession, as not to torment mens consciences with new fangles, nor vex an Age (wearied with contending, and willing to be quiet) with novel inventions. Let all junior Observances be reduced to the Sacred Rule and Rubrick, and then we shall all conform and joyn cheerfully in the Antiphony; *As it was in the Beginning, so it is now, and ever shall be, World without end.*

7. *When a certain tribute was demanded of him, he first proves he was not obliged to pay it; yet lest he should offend them, determines to pay it, and works a miracle to enable Peter to pay it.* An unanswerable argument that Non-conformists are not exempted from Taxes and Subsidies; but what's their Coin to their Conscience?

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It may seem a piece of unpardonable boldness, to say that Dissenters go beyond this pattern ; and yet, 1. they plead no immunity from Assessments. Nor, 2. pay they Levies meerly to avoid offence, but out of sense of *their duty*. 3. Can they raise money so easie as by *Miracle*, they are glad to work hard for it, and yet they endeavour to get their Silver ready against it be called for ; and if their *persons* and *purses* may serve their Prince, they know nothing too precious for his service, that under the Auspices of his Gracious Government, they may lead a *quiet and peaceable life* in all *Godliness and Honesty*.

And now let the *Enquirer* cast up his accounts, and see what he has gained *De claro*, by all these great Examples? The Apostle who was *strong in the Faith*, parted with something of his Liberty, to please and gain the weak ; therefore the weak must part with *their Consciences*, wherein they have no Liberty to gratifie the strong : Jesus Christ, who was the Lord of *Worship*, accommodated his Ordinances to the Jewish customs, therefore the Non-conformists who have no power over *Worship*, may accommodate their practice in *Worship* to the present customs. *St. Basil* concealed his Judgment in a great Truth ; Therefore Non-conformists may subscribe what they judge a *falsehood*.

From the publick instances our *Enquirer* at last appeals to our Consciences. Let me appeal ( says he ) to the consciences of men, is it not plain from hence, that although I be persuaded that such a certain Rite is less commendable in it self, yet if it appear to be an instrument of Accommodation, that it is therefore in that case best on that account. These retrograde appeals from the publick Judgment to the private Conscience are wholly irregular ; yet since he has appealed to Conscience, to Conscience he shall go, whose determination in the case, if it may be heard speak, is this ; That it is plain from those Instances, that if any Rite in it self indifferent, shall prove an instrument of Distraction and Division, it's just upon that account to abolish it, but his Appeal was not drawn Clerk-like ; for the competition, and contest is not amongst us, between one Mystical Ceremony, and another, but between Ceremonies, and no Ceremonies : If the controversie were about a meer circumstance of time, or place, or the natural cloathing of a Religious action ; as whether the publick Worship shall commence at Nine, or Ten a Clock, or whether it shall be celebrated in a house of Timber or Stone, in which Determination

tion the *Worshippers* may perhaps suffer *some inconvenience*, but the *Worship* it self no prejudice, seeing we must worship our God at *some time*, and *some place*, we can have no concern for stiffness or obstinacy ; but when the Controversie shall be about such Rites, which being neither in *general* commanded, nor in their *individuals* expressed, do enter into the *Worship* it self, as an integral part of that Devotion which we present to the *Divine Majesty*, we say such Rites are sinfull, on this side the command of a Church, and can be no fit instruments of accommodation.

After many an impertinent Paragraph, the *Enquirer* starts a new Question, which, though I never once dream't of it, shall have that attendance it deserves. *If I am persuaded that such an Opinion is more true than that which is publicly owned, (so long as the main doctrine of Christianity is not in dispute) may I not rather conceal it, than disturb the Church ?* The case is confessed before a mean Casuist, and the best assistance I can contribute to it's resolution, is to recommend him to the Apostle, *Rom. 14. 22. Hast thou Faith, have to thy self before God !* upon which Text our *Enquirer* descants notably. 1. *By Faith in the text (says he) the Apostle means not the Doctrine of Christianity : For then the meaning should be, that he that understands the great Doctrine of Christianity should conceal it ; well, but what hurt in a concealment ? St. Basil was just now applauded, for dissembling the Coessentiality of the H. Spirit ; which, if the Athanasian Creed say true, is one of the great Doctrines of Christianity, necessary to be believed for Salvation.* 2. *By Faith (says he) is not meant the habit of Saving faith ; we agree to it ! and are glad he can find such a thing as a habit of saving faith.* 3. *By Faith is meant only a persuasion of the lawfulness of such a thing in it self indifferent. I shall not contradict, yet let me say, 1. That though it be a confessed Truth, that celare verum interdum licet, yet 'tis as true praescribere falsum, nunquam licet : Though I may conceal a truth sometimes, I may never assert a falshood. I may forbear to say they are Antipodes, yet may I not say, or subscribe, or swear, there are none, and yet these are none of the Essentials of our Religion. Negative precepts bind us semper, and ad semper, that is, there can be no case put wherein, no time assign'd when it may be lawfull to deny or renounce the smallest Truth, or violate the least of Gods Commands by my practice.* 2. *Though I may conceal my judgment, or suspend*

my

my practice in some of these lesser matters, yet when a sweet concurrence of inviting circumstances shall call for my asserting that Truth, or practising that duty, I am then to assert the one, and practise the other. In some cases I may wave an explicit profession, or open practice, when such forbearance shall be compensated with a greater good, when a little time shall pay the truth, and Gods glory, interest, and make amends for the *lucrum cessans*, and *damnum emergens*, the Spiritual loss sustained, or Spiritual advantage delayed. 3. Though I may conceal or suspend as aforesaid, yet I ought not to give away my Christian Liberty, nor commit any act, or acts, that may destroy my future claim, or be pleaded in Bar to my rigor. 4. When the Consciences of Christians are notoriously hazarded by my silence or forbearance, when I am in danger of betraying my Brother to error, or hardening another in his, I have need of much wisdom and prudence how to speak and act, but speak and act I ought; for it's a most monstrous cheat, to urge the manner of a Duty against the Duty it self; as that because I ought to act prudently, that therefore I ought to sit still. 5. I am much dissatisfied how it should follow from hence, what he makes his conclusion: That we may change any Rite or Ceremony that we have a great kindness for, for one more gratefull to others: Nay, if any Ceremony I have in my worship not commanded by Christ, may do him a kindness, I have no such kindness for it as to disoblige him, nor shall he need to send me back one of his beloved ones in exchange, I shall never feel the want of it. But now the Reader must be intreated to use his eyes; the Assertion was that it is lawfull to conceal my Opinion (when the main Doctrine of Christianity is not in dispute) rather than disturb the Peace of the Church; from whence he would wisely infer, therefore we may practise Ceremonies, which I am either fully satisfied are sinfull, or not fully satisfied that they are lawfull; for this is the upshot: — That we may comply with the Laws in being, so they be not palpably contrary to the Scriptures or common Reason; It is very amazing to me, that I cannot conceal what I think true, unless I must assert what I judge false; nor bite in my sentiments about another's unlawfull practice, but I must practise with him: I may suppress my judgment that such a thing is sinfull, and yet not dare to deliver my judgment that it is lawfull. He that commanded me not to judge my brother, did not command me to imitate him.

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It must not be overlookt, what an *Emphasis* he lays upon this word *palpably*, we may comply with the Laws, so they be not *palpably* contrary to the Scriptures. And pag. 11. It must be an *apparent breach* of the Divine Law, that gives just cause of Separation. And pag. 118. Conditions of *Communion* that are not *expressly* sinfull, and such, wherein there is not a *plain necessity*, and certainty of sin in *compliance*, are justified. *Sinfull terms* will not justify Separation, unless they be *apparently*, *expressly* so. Nor will a *sinfull command* warrant my non-obedience, unless it be *palpably* such. It must be some *gross impiety*, which like the *Egyptian darkness* may be felt: Thus if I be prohibited to partake of the *Lords Supper*, oftner than once in three, four, or seven years, I must pocket up the wrong, because here's no palpable, apparent, *express violation* of the Law of God. The Law says indeed, *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*; but has not determin'd *how often*. As one of your Roman Casuists determins, that we are not bound *actually* to love God above *once in three years*; and another thinks, *once in a mans life* will serve the turn, provided we do not down-right hate him; because the command of *loving God*, is an affirmative precept, which binds indeed *semper* but not *ad semper*. And if all the Rabble Rout of Popish Ceremonies were commanded, and five times as many more, yet these will not justify non-obedience, because (forsooth) they are not *expressly* forbidden by name, nor *palpably* contrary to any one Text of Scripture.

And to conclude, the Reader shall now know at a word the *lowest price of Peace*. That we part with all that, which is no essential point of our Religion, for Charity, which is. This is the lowest penny, take it, or leave it, try the world, and mend your selves, where you can. But, 1. Its *palpably ridiculous*, to oppose Charity to any point, or part of Religion; as if Charity, which is commanded by the Principles of our Religion, should cross those principles: Charity commands a *religious person* to stoop to all in his private concerns, but requires not that any Principle of Religion should stoop to it. 2. It's weakly supposed, that its the concern of Charity, that we be of one uniform practice in the Minutes of Religion, when her highest and noblest Exercise is to embrace those that differ from us in sinless practices. For I cannot yet understand, what interest Evangelical Love has to reduce us to an uniformity in Rites and Ceremonies; and



and do know that Protestants, who differ in the lesser points of Religion, as to Principle, and Practice, do yet maintain a more entire and cordial love amongst themselves, than the Papists who are cudgelled by the iron rod of the Inquisition into a precise Indentity, in their little fopperies.

Did we never hear of two friends that could really love each other with the most endeared affections, though their cloaths were not made by the same Taylor; nor trim'd up with the same ceremonies of Ribbons and Lace; let the Worshipers of *Mabomet* quarrel about their Green and Red Turbants, yet Christian Kingdoms can hold firm peace, and inviolate amity, without abolishing their respective Country customs. The *Irish* in one of our Kings Reigns could not be persuaded nor forced to leave their odd way of plowing and threshing out their grain, and yet that prudent Prince never sent *Talus* amongst them with his *Iron flail* to thresh them into a compliance with more decent and usefull manners. 3. This distinction of the Points of Religion into *accidental or circumstantial*, integral and essential, (or however else they please to marshal it) had need be well warranted, sufficiently cleared, carefully limited, and distinctly buttred and bounded, that we may exactly see where the *Circumstantials* end, and the *Integrals* begin, and where the *integrals* expire, and the *essentials* commence, or we may soon be distinguisht out of all our Religion; for under the covert of such arbitrary distinctions *Rome* has already rooted out much of Religion within her Quarters.

She confesses that Christ did institute both *the eating of the Bread*, and the *drinking of the Cup*; but withall affirms, that he that eats *the flesh of Christ*, receives *the Blood* also *per concomitantiam*. Drinking is not essential to the Sacrament, and therefore she has upon prudential grounds, (as she thinks) appropriated that Moity to the Priests, who need it most, and love it it best: and in the judgment of *Grotius*, both Bread and Wine may be spared, as he learnedly determines upon that Question. *An semper communicandum per symbola?* and 'tis but suitable to what he endeavours to evince. (as our Enquirer cites him, pag. 163.) That the Magistrate exceeds not his commission when he interposes, for the Determination of the circumstantials of Religion. And seeing Bread and Wine in his judgment are not essential to that Ordinance, by his own, and our Authors principles, the Magistrate may (for some time at least) prohibit both; for if the Magistrate has

has a power from God to determin the Circumstantials, he must be supposed to be Judge what are so, and thus we may have all our Religious Institutions distinguish'd, and determin'd away in a moment. For though at present, whilst we are under the care of faithfull Governours, we are secure of the *essentials*; yet we have granted a Principle in *this generation*, which may utterly eradicate all positive and instituted Worship in the next; and we hold all the Ordinances of Christ upon precarious terms, that is, we are Fiduciaries of that grand *Depositum*, till some men shall please to call for it, and then like the *Traditores* of old, must resign and betray the concerns of the Gospel.

( 3. ) He is now entring upon his third labour, which is to prove, That *the things in difference are of such a nature, as may be fit to become a peace-offering, and sacrificed to the Magistrate, the Law, and the Church.* For the proof of which, he will give us these five following Remarks.

( 1. ) That *the things now scrupled in this Church are such as were heretofore submitted to, by the most Leading-men of those that now depart from it.* To which I shall very briefly return these few particulars. 1. That the Non-conformists are not led by men, farther than as they have authority in the name of Christ to lead them. The Leaders or Pastors disclaim all other conduct, than by the Gospel Direction; their power is Ministerial not Despotical; and their People disclaim all such Leaders, as would lord it over their Faith, and take away the judgement of Discretion over their own acts. It's a very uncomely sight to behold a drove of Rational Creatures with their Consciences tayed to one fore horse, and so conducted to a Fair, there to be sold for peace and expediency. 2. With equal reason the Dissenters will plead, That the Worship which they now use, is the very same that was lately used, and practised by some of the most Leading-men amongst the Conformists; and is it not a wonder that whether men go backwards or forwards, yet both shall form an argument for Conformity. If they have *sometimes been Non-conformists*, and are now reclaimed, that shall conclude for Conformity, because they must be supposed to have their eyes anointed with some excellent *Collyrium*, and to see better; If they were once Conformists, and become at last Dissenters, yet that will conclude full as well for Conformity, because they once saw better;

such

such shuffling Arguments would with equal truth serve the occasions of the Dissenters too. Many of the *Conformists* were once *Non-conformists*, and therefore we are no worse now, than they were then; and many of the *Non-conformists* were once *Conformists*, and therefore having tried the difference are more competent Judges which way of Worship is the nearest Rule. And though both these ways of Reasoning are none of the best, yet if their be any advantage, the latter carries it; because there can be no such arguments from *Worldly interest* the one way, which may possibly have a stroke of the other; few are ambitious to be *starved*, and as few that are so irreconcilable to *Preferments*. 3. Not former apprehensions, but present light into the Mind of God from his Word, ought to be our immediate and next Director in our Worship of him: Men may change, as times and external accidents change, but the Rule of Religion is *unchangeable*, and abides for ever.

(2.) Some *Non conformists* dayly come over to the Church, and those none of the meanest for Ability or Piety; but let them brag of any one if they can find him, that hath since the *Resettlement* of the Church apostatized to them. The Dissenters send back the Challenge, let them brag of any one if they can find him, that has apostatized to them. But yet I shall say a little more.

§ 1. It's no wonder to hear of few Conversions to a persecuted Profession. It must be deep impression of duty to God, and a violent respect to the reward of another World, that will prevail with Flesh and Blood to set its face against the blustering wind of Opposition, and row against the impetuous current of general Example. Men are not easily induced to close in with that Worship, which will not onely prejudice, but ruine their Temporal Concerns. It's ordinary to see Secular advantages to command the minds of many, but no turning to a reproached Reformation, but what arises from clear and irresistible convictions. All the avenues to Preferment, all the passes to a Livelihood are so strictly guarded, that men of parts, whose Educations have promised them the outward rewards of Ingenuity and Learning, are sometimes necessitated to sowze over head and ears into Compliance at first dash; all Arguments are drowned in the noise of a croaking belly, and hungry stomachs swallow first, and leave it to the strength of nature to concoct all as well as it can.

Nay,

Nay, from the good old Woman at the Towns-end, that teaches the *Criſs-cross-row*, to the *Belfray-School-maſter*, and ſo upwards, all the places of education are tinctur'd with Conformity; every *Puiſny* is taught firſt to ſwim with bladders, that at laſt he may venture alone; firſt, to act without knowledge, and then with it, and againſt it, like the *Crotonian Milo*, who firſt carried the ſucking calf, till by gradual eſſays he could carry it when a bull. Thus traps of temptation muſt needs take when they are baited at both ends, *great Neceſſities* and *great Preferments*.

§ 2. This Argument is borrow'd, or ſtollen from the *Papiſts*, who uſe and urge it every day againſt the *Proteſtants*; I ſhall propound and anſwer it in the words of *Monſieur de la Motte*, in his late *Motives to Converſion*, p. 108, 109. *D'où vient donc (diſent ils) qu'il y a ſi peu de perſonnes qui quient la Religion Romane? Et que, de ceux qui l'ont quittée pour embraffer la Proteſtante, on en voit une grando partie, qui y retournent, Et qui ſont, comme on dit, leur Recantation? Whence comes it (ſay the Romaniſts) that ſo few quit the Roman Religion? And that of thoſe who have forſaken it, to embrace that of the Proteſtant, we ſee many that return back, and as we ſay, make their Recantation? To which he gives this Anſwer, Je pourrois alleguer mille raiſons particuliers pour leſquelles, pluſieurs illuſtres Proteſtans ont quitté leur Religion en France, qui n'eſt plus à la mode, (dit on) en ce Pais-là, Et ont embrasſé la Romaine, je diſ ſeulement en general, ce qu'il eſt facile de remarquer dans les particulieres, que c'eſt l'inter-eſt, qui les ment, Et les retient, qui les fait changer, Et qui les empêche de rechanger. I could give a thouſand particular reaſons, for which ſome eminent Proteſtants have quitted their Religion in France, which, ſay they, is now no longer the mode in our Countrey; and have embraced the Roman Faith: But I onely ſay this in general, which is very eaſie to obſerve in the particulars, That it is meer Inter-eſt that allures them firſt, and then fixeth them; that makes them change, and then hinders them from a rechange. The penſion of a thouſand Crowns (as he goes on) which they promiſe to a Miniſter, in caſe he will renounce his Calling, is a moſt violent temptation.*

§ 3. I could tell the *Enquirer* of thoſe that have deſerted their ſtation in the Church of England, and have given their reaſons for it, and have embraced a Perſecuted Reformation: I could tell him of many young Scholars eminent for Piety and Learning, who have rather choſen a retired Eſtate and mean Condition, than thoſe Allurements, which would make many a  
mouth

mouth water at them. But let every man stand or fall to his own Master, I am not qualified to judge either way; but this I will say, that whoever shall reason the one way or other, will find his Argument inconclusive, and I have known so much in my small Observation, and known some men too well, then either to be much confirmed in my judgment by their presence, or stagger'd by their absence.

(3.) There are men of as clear understanding, as good life, and as comfortable Consciences in the society of this Church, as are any where else to be found. And if I should say, there are persons of as clear understanding, as good life, and as comfortable Consciences in the society of the Non-conformists, as are any where else to be found, I should discover a vanity equal to that of the Enquirer. I cannot be of every mans Religion, that is of much clearer understanding than my self, unless I resolve to be of twenty contradictory Religions at once; nor can I judge it my duty to imitate every one of a Holy life, further than in his holiness; nor of every mans way that pretends to a comfortable Conscience in his way, because I see some fetch in comfort to their Consciences from their greatest provocations, or grossest delusions: Besides its no part of the clearness of mens understandings, to be wiser than the Scriptures, or to study reasons, why they ought to destroy all that are not of the same intellectual stature with themselves. Nor does it add to their holiness, that they can persecute others whose lives are holy; nor to the solid comfort of their Consciences, that they endeavour to weaken the comfort of other mens; and I will further add, that since my own Conscience can only directly witness to my self, it can never be allowed credence with another, if I deny it its proper work and office in another. But we have met with this Braggadocian Pyrgopolinias before, whither the Reader is referred, if at least he shall judge so inconsiderable a trifle to merit further Consideration.

(4.) The things objected against this Church are but at most disputable matters, because all wise and good men are not agreed upon them, but that which sub judice, and yet under dispute, cannot be called evil, till the dispute is ended, and the decision made against it. To which I crave leave to answer. 1. That then some of the greatest and most important Points in Religion must be called disputable, seeing all wise men, and some good men are not agreed upon them. 2. If the matters be still sub judice, and cannot be called evil till the dispute be ended; why are the Non-conformists exe-

cuted before condemnation? For I hope he arrogates no such partial tribunal to himself, that the things in controversy shall be reputed undecided when he would justify the one, and yet decided when he would condemn the other. 3. We say the things are already decided by Scripture long ago, if that may be judge, and if any other Judge be set up, the Condemned party will appeal thither, as the highest Court of Judgment in matters relating to Conscience and the immediate Worship of God, where alone they ought to be judged.

(5.) *The things scrupled in this Church are such as the like may be found, and complained of in any Church of the whole World, at least since the Apostles times.* To which I say, 1. That I have been too much beaten to the game, than to be overborn by the Enquirers daring Confidence, and do smoothly deny the matter of fact. Many particular Churches may be found at this day, where *Mystical Ceremonies* are not found, much less made the Terms of Communion. But he has two wide creep-holes at which he will escape. 1. That we choose what National Church we will: It seemsthen, a particular Church, and a national Church are Terms that measure each other. And thus, if we instance in the ancient *Albigenses, Waldenses*, or the present *French Churches*, he may reject the issue, because they are not National Churches. And all the Churches for three hundred years after Christ, because they were not National. 2. He will undertake this task, *If he may have the history and knowledge of that Church*, whatever it be or was since the Apostles times, as we have of this. I commend his discretion, for he knows it difficult to get the Church-history of other National Churches, so full as we have of our own.

2. If the Churches in the Apostles times had none of these things now scrupled, we shall rather chuse, and such choice is our duty, to conform to their Patterns than any junior and more green-headed Constitutions. They are the Apostolical Times and Churches, of whose Constitutions we have infallible Records, which we propound for our Exemplars, and he will be tried by any others, if we will bate him them, for which we thank him. I am now expecting a serious Proposition, and he sends us this offer: *That since there is no grand matter of Religion concerned in the controversies between us, nor any violation of the Laws of God in our complying with the Laws of this Society, and since Mahomet must either go to the mountain, or the mountain must come to Mahomet,*

*Mahomet, i. e. one side or other must yield; we will be persuaded to think it reasonable, that the subject should submit to the governor, and Opinion give place to ancient custom, and novelty to the Laws in being. This is his friendly motion, and one so modest, that we would be persuaded to think it reasonable, if he had given us reasonable arguments to be persuaded, which that he has not I think is evident from what has been already said, with these further Considerations.*

§ 1. That his motion is grounded on a false suggestion, That there's no grand matter of Religion concerned in the controversy, nor any Law of God violated by our compliance; for the Perfection of the Scriptures as the rule of Faith, Worship, and Church-Government, is a grand matter of Religion, and greatly concerned in this Dispute. The Sovereignty of Christ over his Church, his compleat Discharge of all his Offices, his Kingly office in making Laws, his Prophetical in revealing the whole Mind of God, is no small matter of Religion, and greatly concern'd also in this Dispute; which Law-giver, by his express Law, and Royal Edict has commanded all his true Ministers, *Matt. 28. 19, 20. To disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe whatsoever he has commanded them;* adding a gracious promise of his special assisting Presence in this work, That he would be with them always unto the end of the World: we think that the Terms of enjoying all the Ordinances of Christ, is but observing *whatsoever Christ has commanded;* which Law is apparently, expressly, palpably violated (to use his own expressions) when any thing else or less or more is made the condition of our admittance into the Kingdom of Christ.

§ 2. I know no reason why any party should be the *Immovable mountain*, that is too stiff in the hams to come to Christ; I have ever judg'd Christ himself to be *that Mountain*, to which *Mahomet* and all Pretenders ought to move. It was noted as a piece of arrogant moroseness in *Austin the Monk*, that he would stir no more than a Mountain to meet the *British Christians* half way in an amicable association: But if the Church will needs be the Mountain, yet let her remember that Christ is set upon *that Holy Hill*, and if she will not move in deference to his Authority. He that touches the mountains and they smok, and makes the hills to tremble, can by his almighty power send such an Earthquake in her bowels, as may cause her to yeeld to reason.

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§ 3. Though



§ 3. Though *Opinion and Custom* may fight it out for me, yet let the proudest ancient Custom bow down to the Institutions of Christ. It has ever been as a common, so a successfull policy to clap boary Perriwigs upon juvenile innovations, to conciliate some reverence to their antique looks: Error has often a more wrinkled face than Truth, but Truth always carries the graver aspect. They that imp their pin-feather'd inventions with plumes borrowed from Time's wings, do not teach them to fly, but flutter: Antiquity is like *Romulus* his *Assylum*, where all pursued corruptions take sanctuary; 'tis the grand Burrough and safe retreat of Superstition, when ferreted out of her lurking holes of counterfeit Reason. He can say very little for his opinion, that cannot plead antiquity, custom, and such like Mormo's: Thus the *aquarian* Hereticks pleaded custom to use water mingled with wine in the Eucharist, whose folly *Cyprian* thus censures, *Victi ratione, apponunt consuetudinem, quasi consuetudo major esset veritate*: Being beaten at the weapon of Reason, they fetch out the old rusty sword of Custom; as if such a Bilbao sword durst try its edge against the tryed Scimitar of Truth; such a roat does *Tertullian* give these childish pretences. *Consuetudo ab aliqua ignorantia, vel simplicitate initium sortita, in usum per successionem corroboratur; & ita adversus veritatem vindicatur, sed Dominus noster Jesus Christus, veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit: Hereses non tam novitas, quam veritas revincit, quodcunque adversus veritatem sapit, erit heresis, etiam vetus consuetudo.* A custom of base and dunghill extract, yet gaining some repute by long usage, and prescribing for its gentility time out of mind, grows sawcy and malapert against Truth it self; but our Lord Jesus Christ called himself by the title of Truth, not of Custom: the clearest conviction of Heresie is not by the leaden Lesbian rule of Practice, but by the golden rule of the Scriptures. Error is error still, and will be so, of Plebeian breed and ignoble parentage, though it hath purchased a Coat of Arms, scrapes acquaintance with some ancient families, and would make it out, that it came in with the Conquerour.

The Gibeonites aded very subtly, when they came to Joshua with old sacks upon their asses, and wine-bottles old, and rent, and bound up, and old shooes, and clouted upon their feet, and all their provision dry, and mouldy as if they had come from far, when all this while they were but their next Neighbours. It's a pretty sight doubtless to see the State which the Great Czar of Muscovy uses upon publick festivals and entertainments; the great Chamber

ber all beset with grave Personages, adorned with Ermines and Gold from head to foot, dazling the weak eyes of vulgar spectators, and yet perhaps you shall find some of these *Knezzes* next day in their *Blue Aprons*, who shall think it no empeachment of their late glories to sell you a penny worth of pepper; such a masque we have presented to us of *old customs*, all gorgeously attired like the *Antediluvian Patriarchs*, and when we come to examin them, they are little better than (to use our Authors expressions) *the dictates of ambition, the artifices of gain, and a colluvies of almost all the superstitions, errors, and corruptions of former ages.*

§ 4. Since there must be *a yielding in order to peace*, then surely they have *all the light and reason to their sides* to have the honour of the Condescension.

1. Who confesses that the matters in difference are *indifferent in themselves*, such as wherein *no grand matter of Religion is concerned*, rather than they who are bound up by *immoveable persuasions that they are sinfull.*

2. They who are *most remote from the primitive simplicity*, and not they who have no higher ambition, than to perform all things *which, and as Christ has commanded.*

3. They who have made *the additions, which cause the Divisions*; and not they, who onely take up their Religion, as near as they can, as they found it delivered and recommended to them by the unerring Word of God.

4. They who have *enough to spare*, and may part with *some excrescences*, and never touch the *Quid of Religion*, rather than they who own a *naked Religion* without any additaments, and if any such be found amongst them, they are content to surrender them up as a sacrifice to Peace.

5. They who by their authority are qualified to make a through Reformation, and such abatements in supernumerary observations, such fillings up of the chafms and vacuities, as may not onely retrieve Peace at home, but procure a general Union with all the Reformed Churches abroad, to the strengthening of the Protestant Religion, weakening the hand of the common Enemy, rather than those poor People, whose circumstances are such, that they cannot propose the terms of Peace to others, and what alterations they shall make in themselves, will be insignificant to an universal Settlement.

6. They who have already given some specimens of their

condescensions to the Romanists, by removing some exasperating passages, and it may be hoped and expected, that they will take a few steps towards a compliance with dissenting Protestants. For as the Author of the *Irenicum* observes well, pag. 132. *That which was laid as a bait for them (the Papists) was never intended as a hook for those of our own Profession.* And therefore to conclude this chapter, I will take the freedom to quote that celebrated Son of the Church for a Theological Notion, whom he has already quoted for a Philosophical one. *Dial. 3. p. 399.* speaking of the Papacy as the Kingdom of Antichrist, he has those notable words. *Which we knowing so experimentally, not to be compassed by needless symbolizing with them in any thing; I conceive our best policy is, studiously to imitate them in nothing; but for all indifferent things to think the worse of them for their using them. As no person of honour would willingly go in the known garb of any lewd and infamous person; whatsoever we court them in, they do but turn it to our scorn and contempt, and are the more hardened in their wickedness; wherefore seeing that needless Symbolizing with them, does them no good but hurt, we should account our selves in all things indifferent, perfectly free, to satisfy and please in the most universal manner we can those of our own Party; nor caring what opinions, or customs, or outward formalities the Romanists, or others have, or may have had from the first Degeneracy of the Church, which we ought to account the more hideously sailed by the Romanists using them; but supporting our selves upon plain Scripture and solid Reason, to use, and profess such things as will be most agreeable to all, and make most for the safety and welfare of the Kingdom of Christ; for this undoubtedly, O Philopolis, is the most firm, and true interest of any Protestant Church or State whatsoever.*

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#### C H A P. IV.

*The vanity of the Enquirers confidence noted, in boasting; that they who find fault with the Churches Constitution, will never be able to find out, or agree upon a better: his Reasoning about this matter examined.*

**I**T was a piece of the old Roman valour, to kill themselves, for fear of being killed; and it's a considerable piece of the new Roman piety, not to stir, for fear of going out of the way, to resolve

resolve against Reformation upon some dangers which are fancied may attend Reformation: That Churches always apprehending, or pretending to apprehend dreadfull inconveniences in all changes, though apparently for the better.

Before we can possibly know whether a *better way* may be found out, we must first be agreed *what is a good way*. Now all goodness consists in the *due conformity* of a thing to its Rule and *Idea*, by which it ought to be measured; and its *fitness* to reach that end to which it is a *means*: and therefore the *betterness* of any thing must be judged of by its *nearer approach* to that Rule, and its *greater proportionableness* to the attainment of its design: If then we could find out a *Worship* more agreeable to the rule of *Worship*, or a *Constitution* more apt to reach the great intendment of *Holiness and Peace*, such a *Worship*, such a *Constitution* will justify it self to be a *better*, than any of its competitors which shall deviate from that Rule, or more uncertainly attain the desired End.

(1.) The first part of our task then will be to find out *our Rule*, which when we have done, we have nothing remaining, but to apply that Rule to those Models which we would erect, or having erected, we would examin their Regularity. And as they shall be found to approach nearer, or depart farther from that Rule, we may confidently pronounce they are therefore by so much *the better*, or *the worse*. Now the *only rule* of Reformation, in our judgment, is the *infallible Word of God*, which we therefore judge sufficient and adæquate, because they give this testimony to their own Perfection: And, seeing we have now to do with those who own the Scriptures to assert *nothing but truth*, it will be evidence enough that they are *such a Rule* if they do but assert that they are so.

It is indeed a new thing to hear them charged as *lame and defective*, such as must be pieced and eked out either with immediate *Revelations*, or human *Traditions*, to render them a complete and perfect standard of our Faith, and acceptable Obedience. To which we onely oppose the Testimony of the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*. Concerning which sacred Rule, I will use our Authors confidence with (I think) better warrant; That they who find fault with this Rule, will never be able to find out or agree upon

a better; whereof the endless Mazes, the perplexed Labyrinths into which they have cast themselves, who despising and forsaking this onely Canon, have delighted to find out by-paths, is very clear, but very sad demonstration; for when they have tried *Traditions*, or gaped for *Revelations*, or depended on the *Churches Authority*, and yet found no satisfaction; they think to secure themselves, and gratifie the Magistrate with a new power, who has already such burthens upon his shoulders, that we have more need incessantly to solicit the Throne of Grace on his behalf for wisdom, counsel, strength to manage and bear them, than fondly to think to do him a kindness, by imposing upon him a greater work which all others are weary of.

But this one Text which I have mention'd, may abundantly satisfy us that there can be nothing requisite to equise and furnish out a *Christian*, a *Minister*, a *Church* for duty and obedience, but what is summarily therein ascribed to the written Word.

§ 1. That the Scriptures are of unquestionable Authority to determine all those *controversies* whereof they have cognizance, because they are *θεόπνευτοι*, *divinely inspired*, which no Person, no Church, no Convention of men, can with any colourable pretext affirm of their Dictates, Canons, Decretals or Constitutions; and that amongst many other Reasons, because they were not *indited* in heat or passion, were not contrived to advance one Party, or to depress and crush another, but were the result of infinite Wisdom, impartially respecting Truth, faithfully acquainting us with the Mind and Will of God, without adhering to any Faction.

§ 2. That there can be no concern of any Church, or Officer in the Church, or Member of the Church, but the Scripture speaks fully to it. As, 1. If a Church will prove her self to be *the pillar of truth*, and expose to all her Members the Doctrine of the Gospel, the Scripture is, *εὐαγγέλιον καὶ διδασκαλία*, profitable for instruction, or, 2. has she occasion to convince the cavilling World, and stop the mouths of gainsayers; the Scripture is *εὐαγγέλιον καὶ κλέγεον*. It lays down the Truth, and thereby discovers Error, Heresie, false Doctrine, all Corruption in worship and manner, it gives us what is *straight*, and therefore enables us to judge what is *crooked*; or, 3. Are there

there any tares sprung up in the field of the Church, sown by the enemy whilst men slept, (and men will sleep) it is profitable also *αὐτῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*, for the Correction, rectifying, and redintegration of whatever is warped, and declined from its Original. It supplies and fills up the wide chasms of defectives, and pares off all excrescences, and prunes off superfluities; or, 4. Must Christians be trained up under Gospel-discipline and order, that they may grow up in Knowledge, in every Grace, in mutual Love, it's usefull *αὐτῶν τῶν μαθητῶν*, no Pædagogy, no Constitution, no Discipline to be compared with it.

§ 3. That it is a Rule which must direct all the Builders in Gods House in whatsoever quality, under whatsoever Character they appear; It's profitable for the Man of God, and indeed it onely becomes the man of sin, he that is the *ἄνομος*, or lawless person, who has a curb for every mans conscience, but will not endure a snaffle upon his own to despise this Rule, and cry up another.

§ 4. The absolute perfection and compleatness of this Rule is also asserted; It's able to make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnish'd to all good works.

Notwithstanding this Perfection of the Scripture as a Rule; it is always suppoied, that every one in his private, or more publick capacity, be able to use and apply the Rule. As the Square, or Rule of the Architect, however exact in itself, yet presupposes him to have eyes to see, and brains to apply it to his work; so the Scripture as a Law teaches duty, and whatever of well-pleasing obedience we can perform to God, yet supposes us at least to be Rational Creatures, that can apply that Law to our own particular actions: Whence these two things must necessarily follow. 1. That it was not onely needless, but impossible, that the Scripture should enumerate or determin upon the particular natural circumstances, of general time, place, person, when, where, who should worship God, every day, hour, and minute to the end of the world; for so the whole world would not have afforded sufficient stowage for Rubricks, nor have been able to contain the Volumes that must have been written; for as the end and use of the Rule, is not to teach the Artificer when he shall begin to work, but how he may do it like a work-man whenever he begins; so neither was the Scripture design'd for a clock to tell us at what hour of the day we should commence the publick Service of God, but that whenever we

we begin or end, we mannage all *according to this Rule*. 2. That when the Scripture has prescribed us *all the parts of Worship*, instituted the *Administrators of Worship*, given Rules how to *separate them to that Office*, and laid down general Rules for the regulating those natural circumstances, which could not particularly be determin'd, as that they be done to *edification, decency and in order*; and has withall commanded us to attend to this Rule, and no other, it has then discharged the office of a Rule, and as a Rule is compleat and perfect.

(2.) Besides our retrospect to our Rule, we must also look forward to the *end and design of all Religion*, and when that is once well fixt, we shall have another great advantage to judge what Worship is *better*, and what is *worse*; Now the great end of all Religion, and specially of Religious Worship, is the *glorifying of God, the pleasing of God*: And therefore whatever shall pretend to that glorious Title, and dignity of being an *act of Religion, a part of Religion*, and yet has no real tendency to the advancement of his Glory, (which it can never have without a due regard to the Rule) ought to be expunged out of the Catalogue of lawfull acts, or parts of Worship; and is so much the more abominable both to God and Man; to God, because it offers him a sacrifice not subservient to his praise; and to Man, because it deludes him with a pretence of recommending his person and service to God, and yet leaves and exposes both to Gods abhorrence.

From what hath been said, I might plead my self competently qualified to gratifie the importunity of the *Enquirer*, and answer the Question, whether a *better frame of things might not possibly have been found out*? If whatsoever agrees with the Rule is good, then what is *discrepant from the Rule is evil*; If what makes a nearer approach to the Rule is *better*, then what *departs farther off, is worse*; but I look upon these kind of Questions as a vapouring party sent out to draw the unwary within the clutches of an Ambuscado.

Whatever Constitution shall impeach the only true Rule of *shortness & deficiency*, is less good than that which implies *no such shortness and deficiency*; but there are some Constitutions in the world, which impeach the only true Rule of shortness and deficiency, and therefore they are less good than those which impeach not the Rule of such deficiency, whatever Constitutions are made, supposed usefull for decency, which are not  
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comprehended under the Rule, do impeach that Rule of deficiency; but there are some Constitutions made, supposed usefull for decency, which are not comprehended under the Rule; and therefore there are some Constitutions which impeach the Rule of deficiency. Whatever is comprehended under a Rule, must at least be necessary *by way of disjunction*; but there are some Constitutions in the world which are *not necessary*, so much as *by way of disjunction*; therefore they are not comprehended under the Rule. There is not the *smallest* or *most minute circumstance* which can cleave to any Religious Act, or wherewith we can lawfully cloath Gods Worship, but it is by the Command of Christ made necessary, at least *disjunctively*. But there are some Constitutions which are not made necessary *disjunctively*, and therefore they are such as wherewith we cannot lawfully cloath Religion, or the Worship of God. We are commanded by Christ to *baptize*; now though it was not possible that it should be determined *how often*, in *what place*, at *what hours*, with *what number of persons* the Ordinance should be administred in every Age and Country from its first institution, to the end of the world, yet it's determined that they to whom of right it belongs, do baptize at one hour or other, in one place or other, and so time and place are determined *by way of disjunction*; but there are some things which 'tis not necessary to do, *the one or the other* to the compleat fulfilling and decent performance of the precept, and therefore are not commanded by way of disjunction.

It would therefore be no such difficult labour to find out a better way, so all the difficulty would lie in reforming abuses, removing corruptions, and reducing Christs Ordinances to their Primitive Institutions: "*Hoc enim adversus omnes hæreses valet: Id esse verum quodcunque prius: id esse adulterum, quodcunque posterius.*" *This is* (saith *Tertullian*) *the great Mawl of all Hereses*, (and I will add, against all Corruptions) *that whatsoever was first is true, whatsoever was introduced afterwards, is a corruption.*

But though perhaps the Dissenters may possibly find out what is better, yet they will never agree among themselves; which is an old politick put-off for Reformation: The levity of which Objection is easily discovered, for,

§ 1. We are all agreed, that the Scriptures are *the only Rule of Worship*, and they that are thus far agreed, are in a fair way towards

towards perfect Unity, so far as 'tis attainable in this state of imperfection; for though they may miss in the Application, through the weakness of their judgment; yet being secure that their Rule is good, and sincerely endeavouring to come up to it, and reform by it, they cannot be *fatally wide*, nor *mortally differ*: All that are *agreed in their Rule*, have this singular advantage, that they can debate their differences amicably upon common Principles, whereas they who *differ in the Rule*, must needs differ in all the rest; they that divide in the *Center*, must needs divide infinitely in their motions towards the *Circumference*, and they that differ in the *Foundation*, must necessarily disagree in the *Superstructures*.

§ 2. All that agree in the Rule, have *prepared minds* immediately to cashier whatever they shall once discover to be repugnant to that Rule, and will easily part with any mistake as it shall be made out to them; whereas they who set up false Rules of Worship, and yet suppose them to be true, are as tenacious of whatever they find suitable to those erroneous measures they have taken, as if they were the most Sacred Concerns of Religion.

§ 3. They that own the same perfect and infallible Rule, are thereby kept within such bounds of sound judgment, warrantable Obedience, and Christian Moderation, that they can maintain Communion with each other, and both of them with the same, *one God, one Lord, one Spirit*, in the Ordinances of the Gospel, though still differing in lesser matters; whereas they who set up new Rules of Worship, exclude all others from their Communion, but such as submit to their *novel Canons* and Constitutions, imposed as the Terms of that Communion.

§ 4. They who embrace the Word of God for their Rule, do keep alive the fire of Evangelical Love towards each other, notwithstanding the little diversities that are found amongst them, when they who advance their own pleasures for the rule and reason of Obedience, are engaged in a zealous persecution of all those who comply not with their Concepts, as is evident in the Church of Rome at this day. It will be delightfull no doubt to the Reader, to be refresh'd with the *Enquirers* Rhetorick, who has been tired with my duller Discourse, and therefore I shall gratifie him with his Reasonings.

It's reasonable (says he) we should be able to agree upon, and produce a better model, lest instead of having a New Church, we have no Church at all: Yes, highly reasonable it is; For--- (Let him that reads now endeavour to understand the strength of his four Arguments.) 1. Such a Society as a Church can never be conserved without some Rites or other. 2. Neither any Society can continue, nor any publick Worship be performed, if all Ceremonies and Circumstances, such as of time, place, persons, and the like, be left indefinite and undetermined. 3. If there must be some determination of Circumstantial, it must be made either by God or Man. 4. If there must be some determination of Circumstances, or no Society, and God hath made no such Determination, what remains but that men must? and then who fitter than our Governors? and what these four learned Arguments contribute to the proving his Assertion: That Dissenters will never be able to find or agree upon a better Constitution, I hope the Learned do perceive, for my own part such is my dulness, I cannot discern it; but let us examin the Assertions as they lie in order.

[ 1. ] It can never be thought by wise men, that such a Society as a Church can be conserved without some Rites or other: [ Rites, Ceremonies, Circumstances, ] are the Terms under which all the collusion lurks: when he would flatter us into the humor to yield him a Point or two, then he speaks of nothing but Circumstances; when he would amuse us with an obscure Term, then we hear of nothing but Rites, and when he would kill us with a mortal Conclusion, then out comes Ceremonies; but I answer:

§ 1. If a Church cannot be conserved without some Rites, then let the imposed Terms of Communion be onely of such Rites, without which the Church cannot be conserved, and we will contend no longer: If any Rite be so necessary to the being of a Church, that its Constitution must moulder away into dust, without it, we are content that Rule be made a Term of Communion:

§ 2. From hence then it will evidently appear that Mystical Ceremonies, such as the Cross in Baptism, the Surplice, ought not to be imposed as the Terms of Communion, because that without such Rites of human Appointment, the Society of the Church may be conserved: I would fain know how the Church was conserved in the early, purer times of Christ and his Apostles? They had not recourse to the Ladies Closet open'd, they understood nothing of the modern curious Arts of conserving, candying,

candying, and preserving Religion in Ceremonious Syrrups, and yet Religion kept sweet and good. They were some of his Holinesses Ladies of Honour that first taught the World, out of a miraculous good will, and tender pity to the Church, to conserve the two Sacraments of Christs Institution, in five more of their own invention ; because our Saviour had not prescribed enow to conserve the Church from Dissolution.

§ 3. This seems to be a little too high preferment for human Ceremonies, to make them conserving causes of the Church; at Rome they have proved defiling Causes, in other places Causes of Offence, Scandal and Division; they have burthened some, and debauched others, and raised persecution against the rest; but they were never yet Conservators of the Churches Purity or Peace; surely the parts of a Church are very sordily put together, that has no other cement to unite them, and the frame and texture thereof exceeding brittle, that must dissolve upon the removal of a Ceremony.

§ 4. If by Rites, he understands nothing more than meer natural Circumstances we grant that no Church can be conserved, no publick Worship celebrated without the Observation and Determination of some such Rites, that is, in plain English no Church can worship God, except they agree to worship him *some where*, which is a discovery well worthy of all this Periphrasis, and tedious Circumlocution ; for whoever thought in a Dream, that a body could exist, and yet possess no place? or an action be spun out by men for an hour, or so, and yet not be *measur'd with time*? It must be some strange vertigo therefore that whirls the brains of these Non-conformists, that they will endure the utmost extremities, rather than renounce and abjure such cross Non-sense, That God *must* be worshipt, and yet *may* be worshipt *no where* ; That a Sermon may be extended to an *hours* length, and yet preacht in an *indivisible instant* : some or other must needs be out of their wits.

God (says he) cannot be worshipt by men without all Circumstances; by Men? No, nor by Angels ! they have their *ubi*, and definitive place; nor can they traverse the Poles in a moment, though they are so swift winged, as to dispatch it in *imperceptible time* ; so that this Argument will enforce the *Cherubims* to conform to the Ceremonies, as well as the poor Dissenters; and well did he say, *It can never be thought by wise men*, --- For he must be a natural Fool or Idiot that thinks otherwise; and to make sure

sure work, he will confound us quite with two most unmercifull Reasons. 1. Reason, *Forasmuch* (says he) *as no petty Corporation or Company can*; nay, I will strengthen his Reason for once; Not only *no petty*, but none of the *great trading Corporation, those nurseries of Schism, and nests of Non-conformity* can be conserved without *some Rites or other*: They have their *pageants*, (and goodly things they are, and contribute wonderfully to their conservation,) but yet to deal freely and plainly with our *Enquirer*, though I allow his *Conclusion*, I cannot swallow his *Medium*. Arguments taken from my *Lord Mayors Show*, will never enforce religious mystical Ceremonies; Bodies Politick may be beholden to some *little artifices* to conciliate Admiration, if not Adoration from the *thick skind Vulgar*, who see no further than the *Scarlet and Furr*; But Religion needs none of these tricks and devises of wit to set her off. She is never more glorious than when she shines in her *naked and native lustre*; she adorns her attire, but borrows no ornament from her cloathing. She is none of these empty *Quelque Choses*, who wanting intrinsick worth to recommend him to Society, thinks to strike the Spectators with reverence to his *Pantaloons and waving Plume*; such was the Answer of *Luther to Vergerius*; That *it was the great fault and folly of Rome, to establish the Church with a Government taken from Human Reason, as if it were some temporal State*.

Reason 2. Because *men have bodies, and are bound to glorifie God with their Bodies as well as Souls*. I am sometimes ready to say in passion of an Age cheated with such silly Arguments, *Qui decipi vult, decipiatur*: he that has a mind to be gulled, much good may it do him. That *we have bodies*, will only infer, that all *natural circumstances*, which necessarily adhere to a *Body*, must be determined; but not at all, that we worship God by *mystical Ceremonies*, for that I may worship God acceptably without them, I cannot demonstrate. Because Christ did so; but that we may worship him acceptably with, or by the Ceremonies, he has not yet offer'd us a Demonstration. I never yet understood that the Dissenters did worship God *in statu separato*, which if they could, 'twould notably disappoint the *Informers*, who could never swear their presence at a Convention, because they never *saw the complexions of their Souls*.

[ 2. ] *Its as plain* (says he) *that neither any Society can continue, nor any publick Worship be performed, if all ceremonies and circumstances, such as of time, place, persons, and the like, be left indefinite and unde-*

*undetermined.* All the style in this Proposition lies in this, that he has wisely foisted in *Ceremonies* amongst *Circumstances*; and to prevent all fraud and legerdemain, let him use a little of that *candor* he borrow'd of his Reader not long since, and tell us uprightly, whether he takes *Ceremonies* and *Circumstances* for Terms of the same import? And if so, then whether he will degrade the word *Ceremony*, from its usual repute, to signify no more than a *natural circumstance*, or advance the term *circumstance* to signify *mystical ceremonies*; for if by *circumstance* he understands *ceremony*, in the common and received acceptation of the word, the Proposition is false; That no Society can be conserved without some circumstances; that no publick Worship can be performed without some circumstances; that is, without *unscriptural symbolical Ceremonies*; and all this discourse will not reach the hundredth part of a proof of it; for its the easiest thing in the world to worship God without the *sign of the Cross*, or any such like circumstances, and there are thousands that have made the experiment; but if by *ceremonies* he intend no more than bare *natural circumstances*; the whole Proposition is granted him, but then the misery is, it will do him no service, contribute nothing to his design.

The Reader may be at a loss perhaps as well as my self about the determinate sense of his words, and it's convenient we should be so at present; matters are not yet ripe for discovery; I know his *cause* requires, his *conclusion* needs *Ceremonies*, but his *premises* are modest, his *instances* only pretend to *circumstances*, such (says he) as of *time*, *place*, *person*, and the like; which must be a little examined.

(1.) *Time.* That *Time* is a *natural circumstance*, inseparably adhering to, or if you will, say *accompanying*, every action sacred or civil, wants not the authority of the seven wise men of Greece to confirm it; that is, *some time in general*, yet *time in special*, that is, *religious time*, is no such circumstance: No action can be done without time to do it in, yet actions may be done without such time, as shall render them either *morally better or worse*; that is, such as add any *moral goodness or evil* to the actions: If then he take *time* in the *former sense*, 'tis then very true, that no publick Worship can be performed without the *determination of time*; it must be determined by some or other when the Publick Worship shall begin, as whether at *eight, nine, or ten of the clock*, otherwise it cannot be attended on by the whole

whole Church. But if time be taken in the latter sense, for such time as shall render the *Worship* more acceptable to God, because perform'd in such time, there's no necessity *man* should determin it, both because all the skill he has, can add *no such respect* to Time, and because God has already determin'd for so much of that time, as his Wisdom has judged necessary.

There are three considerations of Time which may deserve our thoughts in this case.

1. The *Quamdiu*, or the *quota pars temporis*: how long the Action shall continue.

2. The *Quoties*, how often the Action shall recur, as whether in an annual, diurnal, horary, or septenary Revolution, (let that word please or displease.)

3. The *Quando*, or *Epocha*, from what point of time the Action shall start or bear date. When therefore he says, *no Worship can be performed, unless this circumstance of time be defined and determined*: I would know, to which of these considerations of Time, his Assertion does relate? for its certain, that in every of these respects, Time either is, or must be determined by God or Man.

§ 1. Then for the *Quamdiu* of solemn time, we affirm that God has sanctified to his Service, and commanded us to *keep bbly one day in seven*; but how much of this time shall be allotted to private and personal Devotions, how much bestowed upon domestic and family duties, how much assigned to publick service, is not precisely determin'd by God; yet thus far he has determin'd by the Light of Nature, and common Reason, that if a day must be expended in, and divided between *these three kinds of Devotions*; that each ought to have such a proportion assigned to it, as the weight and dignity of the Work requires; will apportioning the whole time amongst them, excepting so much as he has reserved for the incident duties of necessity, and charity; which exception he has put in to *all affirmative precepts*.

§ 2. For the *Quoties*: how often this solemn sacred time shall return: we affirm that God has sufficiently determin'd it, nor can we be affrighted out of our senses, with the empty clamours of *Judaism, Sabbatarianism*, or whatever other noises, irreligion and profaneness can muster up: There is no necessity therefore that any Church should determin upon any other Revolution of sacred time, and, if she shall make the Adventure, she will apparently sin, for she must either make the Revolution narrower, and so sin against the *Churches Liberty*, by prescribing too frequent a

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Return;



Return; or *wider*, and to sin against the *Churches Edification* by too Seldom a Return of the publick worship.

§ 3. For the *Quando*: when this solemn and sacred time shall commence; He that has determined, when *the day of Labour*, has determined thereby, when *the day of Rest* shall begin; as in the one he commands us, to doe *All our work*; so in the other he commands us, to doe *All his*; which is therefore the *more ours*, Because it is *wholy his*: But for the *Quando* of the *publick worship*, As God has not determin'd it, so it's necessary, some or other must: But still, what's all this to Ceremonies? Now the Great Question here will be, *who ought to make this determination*? And in my weak judgment, They who are upon the place, who know best *the particular circumstances*, out of which *the expediency* of such Determination must arise; they who see the conveniences, and inconveniences of determining this way or the other, are the most competent Judges in this Case: Suppose the Question were, whether we ought to meet together for publick worship at nine or ten of the clock? what could a *convocation* say to this? or what *general Law* could be made for all the particular Churches in a thousand miles Circuit? if we look upon the *Country Villages*, they have the *Ox and Ass* to water and feed, their cattle to attend in in the field, for whom God has made *provision*, that they shall rest, and not serve upon his day: If you look on the *petty, or greater Corporations*, they have no calves in the stall, no flocks in the field, their shops are shut in, their affairs reduced to a narrower compass, and therefore may commence sooner then the country villages.

Suppose, nevertheless, that some will needs Determine this affair; That all Churches under whatsoever circumstances, expedient, or inexpedient, right, or wrong, with all their particular members, shall upon pain of excommunication assemble for publick worship, strictly at *nine of the clock*, upon pretence of Uniformity, and that all may unite and associate their devotions, as it were, at once beleaguering heaven, & wrestling for a blessing; I cannot but think what distractions, confusions it would raise in mens hearts, and consciences; what squabbles, what quarrels it would create in the vicinage; For my Neighbours Dial, I observe, goes a full quarter of an hour before mine, and he sets his clock by his own Dial; and then rises in the Morning by his own clock: If for no other Reason, yet because he can hear his *clock* strike, better then his *Dial*, so that  
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here's an endless controversie like to arise between us, whether his clock, or mine shall deserve *Excommunication*; Now to part or prevent this fray, there is a certain *infallible Officer* erected; called a *Sexton* or *Sacristan*, one that will take his oath, his clock goes true, whatever Sir Sun says to the contrary, and he shall decide this Brawl, when he *chimes all-in*, so that in the upshot, this great Question the Church troubles her self with, must be resolved into this *Momentous Canon*, That all Churches shall begin their publick worship, when my *Gaffer whatchicallum* pleases. And thus much for the Circumstance of Time.

(2.) *Place*. This is indeed a *Circumstance*, and considered in general, an inseparable Circumstance of a *Body*; so that it haunts us wherever we go like a *familiar*, and pursues us more earnestly than our *shadow*; and therefore, as to publick worship, there must be some determination of *Common place*, where a Church shall assemble for the ordinary worship of God. But if place be consider'd as *Religious*, that is, as such a place as renders the worship more acceptable to God, we say, It's not in the power of Man to Determine of any such Religious, or holy place, because he can make none so.

And yet though he cannot determine the place as *Religious*, he may determine it as *convenient*, and perhaps *expedient*; And besides, since the Magistrate is concern'd to keep an eye upon all assemblies whatsoever, that the publick peace committed directly to his charge, may be preserved, and not violated by *seditious Meetings*, he may therefore command all the Churches under his jurisdiction to convene in such open places where his officers may come, and make inspection into their demeanours, and behaviours, and the Churches are bound in order to this end, to submit to his determinations, in conscience to God: for if the Place (or time) be *inconvenient*, yet that's onely some prejudice to the worshippers, but no pollution to the worship it self; and the primitive Christians no doubt would chearfully, and thankfully have struggled with many incommodities, provided the freedom of worship at any time or place might be secured to them.

But if more open places will certainly expose them to ruin, they may Lawfully keep their foot out of the snare; for, as Master Hales says well, In times of manifest Corruption, wherein Religious assembling is dangerous; Private Meetings, however besides publick order, are not onely Lawfull, but of necessity and duty, else how shall we excuse the meetings of our selves in Q. Mary's days?

(3.) For *Persons*: they also will fall under the same distinction. The Circumstances of the Person *in general*, as whether his Name be *N.* or *M.* is of little, or no consideration in the case; but for persons *in special*, as marked out for publick service, that is very material. And we affirm that Christ has already determined upon that point; The Qualification, calling, setting apart of such a one to his office, with the Nature and end of his Office, together with his whole imployment, work and duty towards the Church, are all determined, and none has power that I know of to dispense with those determinations. The Materials out of which a Church is to be formed, the ends of that embodying, by what bonds and ligaments they are united, the duty of Pastors, Teachers, and all Church Governours prescribed, by what Laws they shall govern, and how far the members are to give obedience, are all so far limited, that the Church has nothing to doe but to submit to commands of her Lord, and if she be a true Spouse of Christ, she will submit, exercising all prudence in applying general Rules to particular persons, and emergent cases.

(4.) But his last word [ And the like ] will do him more service and us more mischief then all the rest: for how to bring in the *Cross*, *Surplice*, and other *Mystical*, *Symbolical Ceremonies*, under *time*, *place*, or *person*, was very difficult; But this *Et cetera* [ And the like ] will doe the feat; and at this back-dore thousands of Ceremonies, such as *Holy Oyl*, *Spittle*, *Cream*, *Salt*, *Ephata's*, and the like, may be introduced. But what now if these Ceremonies be not *The like* but *other-like*? why, then is all this pompous discourse blown up! A *moral Circumstance* is not *the like* with a *natural*; That which adds neither *moral good*, nor *evil* to the worship, is not *the like*, with one that does so; That which is commanded *with the duty*, is not *the like* with that which is not so. That without which the worship cannot be performed is not *the like*, with that which is not requisite to its performance. I conclude therefore, that *And the like* conceals some mysterious point from us, which 'tis not as yet convenient to discover to us; And keeping a wary Eye upon it, let us proceed to his third assertion.

[ 3. ] If there must (says he) be some determination in *Circumstantials*, it must be made either by God or man: very true! If it must be done, it must be done, there's no remedy. And for all *Religious Circumstances* such as may render the Worship either more useful, and edifying

edifying to men, or more pleasing and acceptable to God, they are already determined by the Lord of Worship; and *Kirke*, or *Keyfar*, have nothing to do herein, at least he has not proved that they have: for those other Circumstances, which are necessary to reduce the Ordinances of Christ into *act and exercise*, its no very great matter who determines them, if they have but *power*, and *abuse not their power*. God has determined in *general* that we worship him, and has prescribed all the Ordinances by which we ought to worship him; and therefore we must come to a determination *when, and where*, we will worship him: He has determined more specially, that the Churches worship him solemnly upon *his own day*, and the Churches must come to a fixed resolution, when they will begin that Worship: he has determin'd we shall baptize *with water*, and therefore if we will execute that Command, we must use *some water or other*; but he has not determined that we shall *make any Figure*, either of *triangle, square, cross, or circle*, and therefore none can determin in *particular*, where God has not determined in the *general*: he has determin'd that I must worship him *decently*, and therefore that I worship him in *some garments*, for nakedness is contrary to *natural decency*; but he has not commanded me in *general*, that I worship him in *holy garments*, and therefore none can determin *holy garments* in Worship. Again, he has determined the *Officers* of the Church, and therefore such and such persons, duly qualified according to his *Rules*, must be chosen to execute the *Offices*; but he has not empowered the Church to *erect new officers*, and *new offices*, and therefore such an attempt is beyond the Churches Commission.

But now (says he) *God has made no such determination*. Ah! but we say, and must say it a hundred times over, if the contrary be a hundred times asserted without proof, That God has already determined all Religious circumstances, which we call Ceremonies, all Ordinances of Worship to exhibit, seal, convey any Spiritual mercy, or Supernatural grace: and for those natural circumstances which attend all actions whether sacred or civil, they must be agreed on before such actions can be performed in a Community: And if this be the game he flies at, believe it, he stoops to a very mean Quarry.

The Reader is often vext with an odd word, which frequently occurs in the *Enquirer* called *Determination*. A term both

of a mischievous and a lubricous nature, and it would be good service to the peace, to bind it to its good behaviour. To *determin*, signifies to settle or fix to one side; that which has hung in the æquipoise of neutrality; when those things which have played in a pendulous posture between good or evil, use or non-use, come to be settled one way or other, they are *determined*: Now the Question is, whether any have power to *determin things in themselves indifferent*, that they shall be no longer indifferent in their use? To which all that I shall need say as to the present occasion, will be comprehended in these following particulars.

1. That where *two circumstances of the same kind* offer themselves, if *the one or the other* be necessary to the discharge of some necessary duty, there's a power lodged somewhere, to determine whether of these two shall carry it: otherwise a *necessary duty* must be eternally suspended, its ends frustrated, and it self hang in *potentia* for ever, without ever being brought into *act*.

2. Where two or more Circumstances offer themselves, none of which are necessary to the discharge of the Duty, there's no power lodged in any to determine for any of them; for if *one unnecessary circumstance* (which is every way unnecessary) may be determined by power from God, ten thousand such may be determined, and then our misery will be this, that though our burthen be *intolerable*, yet we can have no cause to complain, but with *Isaac* must *patiently couch down* under it.

3. If Circumstances besides their *natural adhesion to an act*, have any *Morality* ascribed to them, as if they render'd an act of Religion either *better or worse*, none is vested with *power to impose* them, nor any with a *liberty to use them*: because we ought not to make Gods Worship *worse*; and we are sure we *cannot make it better* than he has made it.

4. In those cases where God hath vested any with a power of determination, it ought to be made clear that they who pretend to the power, have a commission to show for it; because liberty is a thing so precious, that none ought to be deprived of it without good reason: and this is the task which our *Enquirer* will in the last place undertake for us.

[ 4. ] If *Circumstantials* (says he) must be determined, or no Society; and God hath made no such determination, what remains but that  
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man must? and then who fitter than our Governors, who best understand the civil Policy, and what will suit therewith, and with the customs and inclinations of the people under their charge. In which notable Thesis two things call for examination, his Assertion, and the Reason of it.

§ 1. His Assertion; *That none is fitter to determin Circumstantials than our Governors.* Where, 1. We must suppose that he understands Civil Governors, or else his Reason will bear no proportion to his Assertion. 2. Let it be observed, that its no great, or however no killing matter to the Non-conformists, or their cause, who it is that determins meer Circumstantials, for they are things of a higher nature than these, about which the Controversie is, if some mens Interest would let them see it. 3. Seeing that the Determination of such meer Circumstances, in some cases is matter of meer trouble; in some cases impossible for the civil Magistrate to determin them, I am confident they will not be displeased if reason discharges them of so useles a burthen.

As Time, in general, is a circumstance concreated with every human action, so with every command and obligation to duty, there is a concreated command and obligation to determin of some time, wherein to discharge that duty. And hence it must unavoidably follow, That to whomsoever God has immediatly and directly given a command to worship his Great and Holy Name, to them he has immediatly and directly, at the same time, *ipso facto*, given a concurrent Command to determin of all those Circumstances which are necessary to the executing of that Command. Thus, if God has obliged every individual person to pray, he has therewith commanded him to single out, and set apart some time wherein to put up his supplications to God. Thus also, if God has directly, and immediatly commanded every particular Church to worship him jointly and publickly, he has also by virtue of that Command enjoyn'd them to agree upon a time to celebrate and solemnize that Worship: Now this Command is so streightly bound upon the Consciences of all Churches, that though none should determin for them, nay, though all should determin against them, yet are they under its authority, and must come to an issue about it, unless they will draw the guilt of the neglect of worshipping God upon their Souls, with that wrath which is due to so great contempt of the Divine Law.

Now that every particular Church has a direct command to

worship God, and by consequence to determin of those Circumstances which are necessary to the Worship, is evident from this one Consideration, That *they all did so in obedience to the Authority of Christ in his Word*, whilst all civil Governors were so far from determining the Circumstances, that they determined against the Substance.

The Gracious God has now made some of the Kings of the earth *Nursing-fathers to his Churches*, but yet we cannot believe, that the Churches power is less under her *Fathers*, than it was under those *bloody Persecutors*: And if this power be lodged in the Civil Magistrate, and he have no Rule to direct him about the *when, and where*, what a miserable case would the Churches be in, if he should *never determin* these Circumstances, without which the Churches can *never worship* God: for thus proceeds his Argument. *No publick Worship can be performed without the Determination of some Circumstances* (as time for one, and place for another.) But *God has determined none of these Circumstances*, therefore unless some other Determination be made, besides what God has made, no publick Worship can be performed: Again, *If some other Determination must be made besides what God has made*, then it must be made by man, but some other Determination must be made besides what God hath made, therefore it must be made by Man: Again, *If a Determination of Circumstantials must be made by Man*, then by the *civil Magistrate*, But a Determination must be made by Man, therefore by the Civil Magistrate, from whence it will be easie to argue; That if a Magistrate *will not determin* of those Circumstances which are necessary to the publick Worship of God, there can be no publick Worship; but when the Magistrate is an enemy to the Christian Religion, he will never determin of those Circumstances which are necessary to the publick Worship of God. Therefore when the Magistrate proves an enemy to the Christian Religion, there can be no publick Worship of God; Nay, *there ought to be none*: And it will hold against the *Protestants Worship* where the Magistrate is a *severe Romanist*.

Now though it be true that the Command to worship God publickly, be directly and immediately given to the Church, yet seeing every Church is *in the Common-wealth* as a part of it; and that every Soul therein ought to be *subject to the higher Powers*, and because the Peace of a Nation is not a little concern'd



cern'd in the prudent or disorderly management of publick Assemblies, and seeing that the Chief Magistrate is the Vicegerent, and great Minister of God to preserve the peace, that this lower World may not be too like a Hell, therefore has he a very great concern herein. *Ne quid Respublica detrimenti capiat*: And therefore, if any Church shall chuse such *unseasonable times, or places*, as may give just occasion of jealousy, that some mischief is hatching against the Government, he may prohibit them that *suspected place, time, or other jealous circumstance*, and command them to elect some more convenient, and inoffensive ones; that so Religion may be cleared, the Magistrates heart eased, the Peace secured: only it seems reasonable to assert, 1. That the Magistrates power herein is but *indirect, and in order to Peace*, and that the Christian Church had such power to determin all such Circumstances, before ever Magistrates owned Christianity. 2. That the Magistrates power seems not to extend to determin *between contradictories but disparates*; that is, that he hath no power to determin whether the Church shall *worship, or not worship*; but that of *two times, or places, or other natural circumstances*, the one carrying some appearance of suspicion, the other none, he has therein a just power. 3. That where *no private person* might determin of such a Circumstance in his personal Devotions, nor a particular Church hath any power to determin for themselves in their publick Worship, there it seems the Magistrates power reaches not, because he might then make that a Person's, or a Churches duty by *his Authority*, which *without his Command* had been their sin.

1. If then the Question be, who is fittest to determin those Circumstances which are necessarily to be determined? The Answer is ready: They are fittest to determin *to whom the Command is directly given*, and who must answer it to God, if for want of such Determination the Worship of God be laid aside, and neglected.

2. If the Question be put, who is fittest to determin of those Circumstances in publick Assemblies, which relate to the publick peace? The Answer is clear: He to whom *the conservation of the publick Peace is committed*, is accountable to God, if through his default it be violated.

3. If the Question were once more moved; what if the Magistrate should forbid a Church to worship God at all? The Answer

Answer is obvious, though the Duty be hard. He that has made it a Duty to suffer quietly and patiently, has promised suffering Grace, that they may suffer comfortably and conragiously, taking up the cross willingly, bearing it comly, and following their Master faithfully.

4. But if the Question were put (as it ought to be, if it answers the *Enquirers* design) who is fittest to determin of Ceremonies, which are not any ways necessary to the discharge of the Duty, such *new Ordinances*, whereof God has not spoken one word, either in general, or particular? It will be hard to say who is the fittest, because none is fit: That is, though many may be meet to determin of meer natural Circumstances, and they the fittest to whom the command to perform the Duty is directly given, yet none is empowered to make *new Worship*, or *new parts of Worship*, or to add any thing to the Commands of Christ.

§ 2. The Reason of his Assertion follows, *They best understand the Civil Policy, and what will sute with it, and with the customs and inclinations of the People.*

This Divinity, That Religion is to be modelled according to Civil Policy, the customs and inclinations of the People, was certainly borrowed from Apollo's Oracle; and the Idol was therein true to his own interest, who used this one Principle to root out all true Religion, wherever he bore sway.

Where Haman had learn't it I know not, but I am sure he had it at his fingers ends. *Esh. 3. 8.* And Haman said unto the King, There is a People dispers'd and scatter'd abroad among the people, in all the Provinces of thy Kingdom, and their Laws are divers from all Peoples, neither keep they the Kings Laws: therefore it's not for the Kings profit to suffer them.

Thus Aristotle in his Adulatory Discourse to Alexander the Great, tells him, that when Apollo was asked concerning the the worship of the gods, he answered: "Ὁπ τὰ μαντήα πάντα, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις προσάσει, καὶ τὰ πάτεραι ποιεῖν τὰς θυσίας. That all the Oracles enjoined men to sacrifice, according to their own country customs. Thus Socrates in Xenophon: "Ὁγεῖς γάρ ὃν ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς θεὸς, ὅταν περ αὐτὸν ἐπερωτᾷ. Πῶς αὖν τοῖς θεοῖς χαρίζοιτο; Σπουδαίνειται, Νίμω πόλεως. You see that the Delphian god, when any one asked him, how he might worship the Gods with acceptation? answered, According to the Law of the City or Common-wealth. And Seneca professes, that in matters of Religion he considered not: *Quæ diis grata, sed*

*quæ legibus iusta* : Not so much *what was acceptable to the gods, as what was warranted by the laws of the land.* But I hardly forbear smiling, when I read how the Delphic Devil was put to his Trumps about this Question: Tully tells us, *Lib. 2. de Legibus.* “Cum Athenienses Apollinem Pythium consularent, quas potissimum Religiones tenerent; Oraculum editum est, eas quæ essent in more Majorum. *When the Athenians consulted Apollo, what forms of Religion chiefly they should embrace? The grave Oracle answers, Those which had the Authority of their Ancestors custom and usage.* But here the Embassadors crost him, and told his worship; “Morem Majorum sæpe esse mutatum; *The Custom of their Ancestors had been often changed.* Alas, they had reform’d, and reform’d again and again, over and over, and could arrive at no settlement for want of a Rule, and therefore they demand: “Quem morem potissimum sequerentur è variis? *Which of all those various Customs and Rites they should observe? The Devil, who is never wholly at a loss for an answer, gave them this: Optimum! pray pick out the best you can find; though never a barrel had better herrings.* But to this Reason I say;

1. That he has now wholly given away the Churches Authority, which has made such a noise in these last Ages, and all her power in determining things indifferent is surrender’d upon discretion. Its very suspicious that they have no assurance of the consistency of their Notions, when they know not where to fix *this power of Instituting, and imposing Ceremonies*: one Age talk’t of nothing but *πάντα ἐν ἡμεῖς, καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν*, but we hear no more of that but privately among friends: another time the Church was brought in to vouch for them, but it will not do there; at last one Thomas Erastus taught us to throw them upon the civil Magistrates; Grotius has made use of the Notion, and for his sake we cry it up at home, but another Chapter will offer us farther occasion to discourse that matter.

2. That the Magistrate understands the civil policy best, is very true, but no warrant for the imposing of Ceremonies; for, what is the civil Government prejudiced, if I worship God according to his own Rule? or what propriety of the subject destroyed; what prerogative of the Prince impaired; or what privilege of Parliament invaded by a Ministers baptizing according to Christs naked Institution, without the Cross?

3. Its one of the greatest disservices the Enquirer can do to Religion,

Religion, to make it truckle to the Humours, and customs of the people: p. 59. he tells us, *the vulgar are altogether for extreams; and blames Calvin for Complying with the Humour of the vulgar.* And yet now all oth' sudden the Magistrate must determine, because *he knows best what suits with the inclination of the People:* though indeed one main end of the Christian Religion was to oppose those radicated Customs, and Idle Humours received by Tradition from their Fathers.

I am now obliged to look a little backwards, and consider his attempts to prove, that *God has not determined Circumstances:* wherein if he had please to understood others, all this had been spared, unless perhaps he understood not himself.

A long story he tells us of *Temple and Synagogue worship.* How punctual God was in his directions about the former, how more lax in those about the latter. And his Reason is: *Because there was nothing symbolical, but Natural Religion, which the Notions they had of God, and the common sense of Mankind was sufficient to guide them in.* Which discourse of his well improved, would give a notable shake to the groundwork of this whole Chapter: for all the Religion of Christians is either *instituted, or natural,* If it be instituted it depends wholly on the Will of God, to make it known to us, and to make it our duty: and therefore so much of it as is of this nature, will plead the previledge of the Temple, Man has nothing to doe with it. If it be natural, then the *Notions we have of God and Common sense are sufficient to guide every particular Church in it, nor shall they need any Dictatorships to supply the defects.* As *Christ* has cleared up to us the *Moral Law;* so he has prescribed us a *Ceremonial Law:* And as it would be a bold affront to the Divine Majesty to pretend to add one commandment to the former, so is it no less an usurpation upon the Legislative power of *Christ* to superadd one institution to the latter. He that may make three or four Human Sacraments, may with equal pretext make eleven or twelve human moral commandments.

There is a command, Deut. 12. 32. *What thing soever I command you observe to do it, thou shalt not add thereto; nor diminish from it.* And under whatever dispensations we are, under the restraint of this prohibition. This is granted by all in the general, onely the Question is what Constitution or Institution will amount to an Addition to Gods Commandment? To which I Answer, 1. *Negatively:* It can be no Addition to a Commandment, to determine

determine of such Natural Circumstances, which are necessary to the executing the particular duties commanded either by a Ceremonial or Moral precept. God has commanded me to *relieve the widow and the Fatherless*, with part of that which his bounty has graciously given me: he has not determined *on what day or what hour of the day*, or in what particular place, or to what persons by Name I shall extend my charity and therefore every Person to whom the Command is given ( and it is given to every man to whom God has given ability ) must determine these, and other Circumstances, without which 'tis impossible that Law should enure, and take effect. Thus has he commanded some to *Baptize with water*, but he has not told us, whether that water shall be brought from *a River or Spring*; and therefore he that is commanded to baptize, is *thereby Commanded* to determine, and he is necessitated to it, if he will discharge his Duty: nor can such determinations be interpreted any Addition to the Law, because they are *included in the Law*, unless we will suppose the Law Nugatory, and to be vacated for every forward Caviller. 2. *Affirmatively*: whoever shall institute any ceremony, which is not necessarily required to the performance of any of Gods commands, such as is not comprehended in any general Law of Christ, must necessarily be adjudged to have added *another Law or institution* to the Institutions and Laws of Christ.

To illustrate this, I shall use a very familiar Instance; I will suppose a standing *General Law* in a Nation, That *no person (except the Legislatour) shall add to the Laws of the Land*. I will suppose also a *particular Law* promulgated by the Legislatour: That *every subject shall sweep his door once a week with a Beesom*: Now to sweep my door with a Beesom of Birch, or Broom, cannot possibly be any Addition to that Law, because 'tis necessarily required to the putting of the Law in practise, that I do it with the *one, or the other*, and therefore they are both comprehended *virtually* in the Law by way of *disjunction*, that is, either with *this, or that, or some other*. Again, to sweep my door on the third day of the week, and at the ninth hour of the day, can be no Addition to the Law, because I am commanded to do it, upon *some day in the week, and at some hour of the day*, and the Law not having defined the precise day and hour, supposes it indifferent to the Lawgiver, which I chuse, but *one or other I must chuse*, unless I will obstinately disobey the Law.

But

But now, If I will not onely sweep my door, but over-Officially will needs make a *Cross* over it, this is an Addition to the Law, being neither comprehended under the Command of sweeping, nor necessarily required to the reducing the Law into act.

Let us suppose yet further, that the *Mayor* of some of our *Enquirers Petty Corporations*, with the advise of his Brethren, shall put forth an Order or Edict, that Non-obstant the Law *De non Addendo*, every person within the Limits of that Burrough shall be obliged to *Cross*, as well as sweep his door, and that unless he will cross it, he shall not sweep, and that every man shall subscribe to this Order and Edict, and whosoever shall contravene the same, shall be disfranchised; This must needs be interpreted an Addition to the Law with a witness; A most exprefs and daring violation of it.

But now to amend the matter, we will suppose the *Mayor* with his Brethren shall solemnly declare, that though they do command Crossing as well as sweeping, yet they do not hereby intend, in any wise to make any *Addition to that or any other Law*; such an explanatory declaration would be of little Credit among the more Considerate sort of men, as being contrary to the fact.

But Mr. *Mayor* will plead, that though he has added something for the greater solemnity, and decency of the Action, yet he pretends not to make a Law for the Nation, his is onely an order of the Court for his own Corporation, and therefore he ought not to be charg'd with adding a Law, to the Systeme of the Laws; But his worship is hugely out, for the General prohibition, caution'd him not onely against Adding a Law to the Law, but against Adding any thing to the Law.

The Reader has often deserved our Distinction of *Natural* and *Moral Circumstances*. Now a *Natural Circumstance* is such a one, as arising out of, or adhering to a *Natural Action*, adds no Goodness or Evil to the Action: but a *moral Circumstance* is such, as always renders the Action either better, or worse: Thus Baptism is neither better nor worse, more nor less pleasing to God, whether it be administred at ten a clock or eleven; but every *symbolical Ceremony* must either render the ordinance to which it is added, or with which it is used, more or less acceptable. Thus the signe of the Cross instituted to signify a persons dedication to the Lord Christ as his faithful Souldier, must either add to, or detract

detract from the moral goodness of that Institution to which it is annex't, or with which it is used: for either it makes it *better*: As doing the same thing with Baptism, viz. dedicating a person to the service of Christ; seeing a double tye, or obligation to any duty seems stronger than a single one, or else it will render it *worse*, because it does that *superfluously*, which Christs own Ceremony had before done *sufficiently*; and endeavours to perform that *ineffectually*, which the Institution of Christ had already *effectually* performed: And because it being a part of instituted Worship, and yet wanting Divine Institution; nor having any track or footstep in the light of Nature, it seems to *over-do* what was once *well* done.

Now since it must either prejudice, or meliorate the Worship, it may be convenient to inquire, whether it may have a *propitious* and *benign*, or a *malignant influence* upon it? And Dissenters are inclined to think *the latter*. All the goodness of Instituted Worship depends meerly upon the authority of the Legislator, either as he has instituted it, or empowered others to institute it, or promised to accept it from us, and bless it to it: Now (say these Dissenters) Christ has neither instituted this dedicating Symbol, nor empowered others to institute it, nor promised to accept it at our hands, nor entailed any blessing upon it, and therefore it must needs render the Worship less good, because it self (as used) is *evil*: and whether Christ has *instituted* it, or *warranted* others to do it, or *annext* any such promise to it, they are willing to joyn issue with any of their Brethren, who will soberly manage the Debate.

Some of them I have heard thus argue: All *Worship* not *commanded*, is forbidden.

But these Ceremonies are *Worship* not *commanded*; therefore they are forbidden.

§ 1. The major Proposition I thus prove, first from the concession of the learned Dr. H. Hammond, a great and strenuous Patron of Ceremonies, who in his *Treatise of Superstition and Will-worship* against Master D. C. freely owns it, That all *uncommanded Worship* is forbidden. Secondly, I prove it by this Reason. They who may institute *new Worship*, may destroy the *old Worship*. For *Cujus est instituere, ejus est destituere*; the same authority that can *make a Law*, can *repeal a Law*: But no man can *destroy the old Worship*, therefore none can institute *new Worship*. Lastly,



Lastly, I prove it from the Authority of God; who destroyed Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10. 1. and renders this Reason of it, because *they offer'd strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not*: I know it answered by Master Hooker, and others, That the strange fire was not only *not-commanded*, but *forbidden*: To which I reply, suppose that to be true; yet God only insists upon this, that it was *not-commanded*: It is pleaded further, that God was strict, and punctual in his Commands to the *Jewish Church*; but he has indulged us a greater latitude under the Gospel; but the Reply is easie; That our Liberty under the Gospel, lies not in an exorbitant power to frame *new Ceremonies*, or *new Worship*, but in our discharge from the servitude of the old; not that we may create more, but that he has loaded us with fewer particulars of *Instituted Worship*: It's then very evident, That *all Worship not commanded is forbidden*.

§ 2. The minor I thus prove, viz. That *Symbolical Ceremonies are Worship not commanded*; that which is a part of *Worship*, is *Worship*, but the Ceremonies are a part of *Worship* and not commanded, therefore they are *Worship not commanded*. None will scruple to grant the major: The parts must needs partake of the nature of the whole: The minor I thus evince, from the Enquirers Concession in his Introduction; where he reckons it amongst the glories of the first times of Reformation. That the *Liturgy and Publick Prayers were counted a principal part of Gods Worship*. That which is made a part of a principal part of Gods Worship, and yet uncommanded, is a part of *Worship not-commanded*; but such are the Ceremonies, therefore they are a part of *Worship not-commanded*. The former Proposition depends upon a known and received Maxim: *Quod est pars partis est pars totius*: the second Proposition is our Enquirers own Assertion; *The Liturgy is a principal part of Worship*, the Ceremonies are a part of the Liturgy, therefore the Ceremonies are a part of a principal part of *Worship*; and if the Enquirer stick at any thing here, I will make him this fair offer; let him undertake to prove the Ceremonies *commanded*, and I will undertake to prove them *Worship*.

There are only some excellencies in this Chapter, which like the *Sporades* lie dispersed up and down his Discourse, whose coherence not obliging them to any fixed residency, I shall for a conclusion, in this place consider them.

(1.) His first great Assertion is, pag. 147. *That Christ never*  
went

went about the compoſure of Laws, either of Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Policy. We ſhall not need to concern our ſelves about Chriſt's civil Laws, ſeeing he profeſſes his Kingdom was not of this world: 'twas not a worldly Kingdom, adminiſtered according to the maxims of State, and myſteries of Policy which had obtained here below; that it ſhould be Spiritual: The Laws and Conſtitutions, the Officers and Miniſters thereof of Divine original, managed for Spiritual ends by Spiritual means; the rewards ſpiritual and eternal, the puniſhments inflicted upon the diſobedient all ſpiritual, ſo the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, v. 5. And having in readineſs to revenge all diſobedience.* It's true alſo, that when once we have tinctured our brains with falſe notions of Eccleſiaſtical Policy, whereof we find no footſteps in Scripture, we ſhall be ready to affirm as much of thoſe Laws, which he has preſcribed concerning the Adminiſtration of his Spiritual Kingdom; but this we think clear. 1. That Chriſt has inſtituted as many Laws, as ſuch a Church as he eſtabliſhed ſhall need; and perhaps he was not concerned to write Decretals, Extravagants, Gloſſes, Canons, Bulls, to fit all the Governments that the wit of man ſhould afterwards excoſitate. 2. He has by Himſelf and his Apoſtles deſcribed all the Officers, which he judged ſufficient to conſduct his Diſciples in ways of holy obedience through the temptations of this world to eternal Life. 3. He has alſo inſtituted as many Ordinances and Sacraments as many ſerve to guide and direct them as Chriſtians, and let any one name one that is wanting to that end, if they be able. 4. From the nature of thoſe Officers which he hath appointed, the ſpecies, nature, kind, of his Eccleſiaſtical Government is abundantly manifeſted. 5. He has given expreſs charge that it be not ſo with his Officers, as 'tis with the Kings of the Gentiles who exerciſe lordſhip over them, Luke 22. 25. 6. Nor has he commiſſioned any Governours to make any Laws directly for his Church, as a Church, binding the conſcience of his Diſciples. 7. The Sacraments which he has ordained, the expreſs Rules he has given for Paſtors or Biſhops, with all other Officers, are evidence ſufficient that he has made ſome Laws of Eccleſiaſtical nature; and that he has been defective therein, becomes not Chriſtians to aſſert.

(2.) *The Apoſtles (ſays he, ibid.) gave certain directions ſuited to the conditions of the times and places, and people reſpectively; but*

never composed a standing Ritual for all aftertimes : which will be put beyond all dispute by this one Observation, that several things instituted by the Apostles in the primitive Churches, and given in command in their sacred Writings, were intended to the obliging only so long as Circumstances should stand as then they did, and no longer. Where we have two things that challenge Consideration.

§ 1. His Doctrine. That the Apostles gave certain directions suited to the conditions of the times, places and persons respectively, but never composed a standing Ritual : To which I say. 1. If by a standing Ritual he mean a Portuis, a Liturgy, a Mass-book, a Cereimonious Rubrick, the Rules of the Pye, or the like, it's very true, and that which the Non-conformists do gladly accept the confession of : but if by a standing Ritual he understand fixed Laws, suited to the condition of the Church in all Ages, under all the various dispensations of Gods Providences, we deny it, and expect his Proof.

§ 2. His Evidence is this. *This one Observation will put it beyond all dispute.* It's a happy Observation, and deserves a Hecatombe for its invention, that will silence all dispute in this matter : but what is it? *That several things instituted by the Apostles in the primitive Churches, and given in command in their sacred Writings, their Epistles were intended, and so construed only to the obliging so long as Circumstances should stand as they did, and no longer.* To which I answer.

1. That there were indeed some temporary Ordinances, such as were to expire with the reason and occasion of their Institution ; but then there was also sufficient evidence that it was the Will of God that they should expire and cease : such was that Command of Anointing with Oyl, Jam. 5. 14. which was sealed and attested by an extraordinary concurrence of Gods power, witnessed to by miraculous effects. But God having now broken that Seal, withdrawn the concurrence of his Power, we need no other evidence that it was onely proper for the first planting of Christianity, and is now long ago out of date.

2. His one Observation comes infinitely short of putting this question out of dispute with any wise man ; for what if several Institutions were temporary, will it follow that none were perpetual ? what if some were suited only to those times, shall we thence conclude there were not enow suited to all after times ? There were extraordinary Apostles, are there therefore no ordinary

Pastors

*Pastors and Teachers?* Or must a Nation be at all this vast charge to maintain human creatures? what if some Rites were momentary? Are there not *Sacraments*, in the right use whereof Christ has promised to be with his Ministers to the end of the world? Such wherein we are to *shew forth the Lords death till he come*. It's as easie to say all this of *Baptism and the Lords Supper*, that they were calculated only for the meridian of those days, (and some are not ashamed to say it) as of any other Order or Constitution of Christ by his Apostles, whose temporary nature is not expressed, or evidently implied in the temporary Reason, upon which it was built.

3. The Epistles of the Apostle to the *Corinthians as a Church*, shews what ought to be the Order and Government of every Church: The occasion of writing those Epistles might be, and was peculiar to them, and so was the occasion of writing all the rest, but the design is common to all. Nor ought any one to dare to distinguish betwixt temporary and perpetual Institutions, where the Scripture has not furnisht us with sufficient ground for such distinction.

4. As there never was a more pernicious and destructive design managed by the Prince of darkneis, than the rejecting the Scriptures as the only Rule of Faith, Worship, and all religious Obedience; so the Mediums whereby 'tis carried on, is the very same with that of this Enquirer: There is an absurd Generation amongst us in this Nation, to whom if you quote the Apostles Authority in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, for the standing and perpetual use of the *Lords Supper*, will give you just such another answer. *What do ye think we live at Corinth, what is the Epistle to the Corinthians to us, who are English men?* and so it seems unconcern'd.

Thus the Papists justify their half Communion: *Serenus Cressy, c. 12. p. 137.* in Answer to Dr. Peirce, his *Primitive Rule of Reformation*; we acknowledge (says he) Our Saviour instituted this mystery in both kinds. That the Apostles received it in both kinds, that St. Paul speaks as well of Drinking, &c. But the general Tradition of the Church (at least from his beginning) will not permit us to yeeld, that the Receiving in both Kinds was esteem'd as necessary to the essence of the Communion, or integrity of the participation of Christs Body and Blood.

But let us see what service his select Instances will do him to prove his Doctrine. Of this nature (says the Enquirer) were

*the Feasts of Love, the Holy Kifs, the Order of Deaconesses.* To which I return.

1. *The Feasts of Love, and the Holy kifs* were not as all *Institutions of the Apostles*. All that the Apostle determined about them was, that supposing in their civil congresses and converses they salute each other, they should be sure to avoid all levity, wantonness, all appearance of evil; for Religion teaches us not only to worship God, but to regulate our civil actions in subordination to the great ends of Holiness, the adorning of the Gospel, and thereby the glorifying of our God and Saviour; I say the same concerning the *Feasts of Love*. The Apostle made it no Ordinance, either temporary or perpetual, but finding that such a civil Custom had obtained amongst them, introduced, we charitably believe, for the maintaining of amity amongst them, and seeing it sadly to degenerate amongst the *Corinthians*. He cautions them against gluttony, drunkenness, all excess and riot, to which such Feasts, through the power of corruption in some, and the remainders of corruption in the best, were obnoxious; which is evident from 1 Cor. 11. 21. *One is hungry, another drunken.* The Apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 2. 8. commands that men pray every where lifting up holy hands. Can any rational creature imagin, that he has thereby made it a duty, as oft as we pray to elevate our hands? That was none of his design to that age, or the present: But under a ceremonial phrase he wraps up an Evangelical Duty. As if he had said, Be sure you cleanse your hearts, and if you do lift up your hands, let them be no umbrage for unholy Souls.

2. Concerning *Deaconesses*, I can find no such Order or Constitution of the Apostles. It's true, they used in their travels and other occasions, the services and assistances of Holy Women, who cheerfully administred to their necessities, and are thence called *διακοναί*, and said *διακονεῖν*. But how childish is it to conclude an order or institution from so slippery a thing as an Etimology? The Angels are called *ἀγγέλων πνεύματι*, ministering Spirits, Heb. 1. 14. will any from hence infer, that they read the Liturgy? Magistrates are siled *ἀνδρες τοῦ θεοῦ*, and *διδάσκαλοι θεοῦ*, Rom. 13. 4, 6. And yet it's no part of their office to read Divine Service. St. James was by some Ecclesiastical Writers dignified with the title of *ἀρχιεπίσκοπος*. Whence some conclude he was a Liturgy-maker. And thus our willing Enquirer, to serve a turn, must needs have those good Women that did

did διακονεῖν. by all means to have been ordained to the office of *She Deacons*.

These words λειτουργεῖν, and διακονεῖν, as Bellarmine notes, signify no more in their general import than *quolibet publico munere fungi*, to perform any publick service for the common benefit, whether Sacred or Civil : But when they are applied to any religious work or service, then by accident they have a sacred signification stamp'd upon them : and therefore the same Cardinal from those words, Acts 13. 2. λειτουργούντων ὃ αὐτῷ πρὸς κτεῖον as they ministred to the Lord : He found out a Mass, compleatly rigged out for service : Others will discover from thence a Liturgy, though the duller sort of people can espy no more than the *Worship of God*, which may very well consist without either. 1. In a word. The duties of saluting with an *Holy Kiss* ; the ordering of all our Ἀγαπᾶι, or feasts of Love to Gods glory ; the ministring in our respective places to the necessities of the Saints, are as much in force as ever, unless Holiness be grown out of fashion, so that this one Observation will hardly put the Question beyond all dispute. Let him try a second.

(3.) If it be true, as he says, that the Christian Religion was to throw down all Inclosures, to unite the world under one Head, and make all Nations one People, and therefore must be left with freedom as to Circumstantials : Then it seems they design some depopulating Inclosures, and to disunite the World again, who set up such distinguishing Ceremonies, as divide those of the same Nation, the same Religion, both at home and abroad.

(4.) His confidence, that it is evident, that it is unreasonable to expect, that every Ceremony made use of by Christians, should be found prescribed in the Scripture, or proved thence, does not at all move me ; I am accustomed to encounter feeble Proofs, seconded with gigantick confidences : I think its reasonable that they who pretend to imitate Christ, should follow his example in this also, John 5. 30. I can of my self do nothing, as I hear, I judge : And that they who act under his authority, should produce his Commission, or at least not expect so ready a compliance with those Ceremonies, which they confess not to be proved from Scripture. In the mean time from Circumstances in the premises, to Ceremonies in the conclusion ; from some Circumstances to all, from natural to moral, is a leap too great for any one to take

that valued the breaking of his neck, more than the breaking of his fast.

His fine Story of *Pacuvius* is lamentably impertinent, for the Question *there* was, who should be the *Senator*, allowing the *Senate*, approving the *Order*, but quarrelling the *Persons*: But Dissenters great Dispute is about the *Office*, whether *jure divino* or no? They question not whether *Cross* or *Cream* suit best with Baptism, but whether any such Ceremonies ought to be used with it, or added to it? They do not set up two or three new devices as candidates for preferment, but plead that *all of that kind* be removed. And if all the scuffle were, which of them should be used, which repudiated, the Non-conformists would not bet a penny on either of their heads.

## CH A P. V.

A through Examination of that Principle, whereon the Enquirer lays too great stress: That God lays very little stress upon Circumstantials in Religion.

THE Historian observes of the *Ligurians*, a kind of *Banditti*, that skulk't here and there, and always plaid *least in fight*, that *major erat aliquanto labor, invenire, quam vincere*, they were an enemy harder to be found out, than being once discovered, to be routed: upon which account this Enquirer may pass for an Antagonist more troublesome than formidable; and yet therefore formidable, because troublesome.

He professes himself as ready to lay down his life for the preservation of *Unity*, as in testimony against *flat Idolatry*; and next to, if not before them, he seems willing to dye a thousand deaths, rather than ever state a Question.

God lays very little stress upon Circumstantials: that may be true! and Gods lays very great stress upon Circumstantials: that may be as true also! But when he lays very little, and when very great stress upon them, let others blow the coal for him, he will save his breath for better purposes.

The Question would receive a very quick dispatch, if we his poor *Plebeian Readers* were worthy to know what he intends by *Circumstantials*; but seeing we are none of his great *Cronies* and



and *Confidents* that may be admitted into his Cabinet-counsels, we must be content with the *Andabatarian Fencers*, to cut it out blind-fold.

If he were under any obligation to use such *mediums and instances*, as were proportionable to his Conclusion, we might conjecture that by *Circumstantials* he means some *Divine Institutions*: But seeing he has imposed upon himself no such severe Discipline, I know none has that power over him, as to compel him to their Laws of Discourse and Disputation.

God lays very little stress upon *Circumstantials* *undetermined by himself*; but there *Imposers lay the main stress*: and God lays very great stress upon *Circumstantials* *by himself once determined*; but there ( I thank you ) our *Enquirer* lays *very little*. And there is reason enough, and to spare, why God should lay great weight upon the smallest matters which he has commanded, but not half enough, why men should lay such a stress upon their pleasures, as to venture the Churches Peace upon them, unless it could be made out, that they had *Authority* from God to do it *warrantably*, an *Infallible Spirit* to do it *exactly*, and *infinite Charity*, to guide that *Authority*, without which, to intrust any Creature with such a power over *Circumstantials*, were but to put a sword into its hand, that would kill some, wound many, and at last destroy himself.

It is indeed a noble design which he pursues, *viz. to beget in men better Notions of God, and better Measures of Religion*; for hitherto men have fancied God to be very rigid and severe about *small sins*, but our *Enquirer* will ease the minds of men of their scrupulosities, and discharge Conscience from any regard of the Authority of God in his positive Laws and Institutions. A work infinitely gratefull, and eternally obliging this Profane and Atheistical Generation, who had rather keep ten of their own, than one of Gods Ceremonies.

And with such Sophistry did the Arch-enemy prevail upon the less wary minds of our first Parents; *Ye shall not surely die!* the Command is meerly positive, *no eternal reason of evil* in the thing; and God lays *little, very little stress upon Circumstantials, secure but the main*; Let there be *no Schism* between you, and never trouble your selves about these Institutions, which are but *secundæ intentionis*; and he is seconded notably by the *Enquirer*, p. 161. *All Ceremonial Appendages*, (and such were the Trees of Life and Knowledge in Paradise; Circumcision and the

Passover, under the Law ; Baptism and the Lords Supper, under the Gospel ) are perfectly subordinate, and ought to yield to the designs of Peace, Charity, and Edification. And yet these poor deluded ones found to their cost, that He who represented God as a *Captious Deity* (as the *Enquirer* with great seriousness words it) proved himself a *Captious Devil*; and that it had been more their Interest to have credited Gods most severe threatnings than Satans most sugred promises.

But if it be true, That God lays so very little stress upon his own, we need not question but Men will lay at least as little upon their Institutions; If God be so indifferent, and remiss, we hope we shall not find them rigorous; for seeing *Magistrates* are called *Gods*, such as bear some considerable part of his Image, and borrow of his Authority, they will no doubt represent that God to us, truly as he is, *A God of Mercy, grace, and pity*; and not watch advantages against their Creatures: but so long as the Main of subjection is provided for, and the substance of their Institutions observed, Alterations may be made in lesser matters without their Offence.

That the *Servant* is sometimes more severe then the *Master*, we are taught from *Gebazie's* sin, and may we never learn it from his *Leprosy*. 2 King. 5. 20. My Master hath spared *Naaman* this Syrian, but as the Lord liveth I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. And there was another *Servant* in the parable, who laid a great stress upon a few *Deniers*, when his Lord laid less upon many *Talents*; And would have pluckt out his fellow servants throat for a sorry Circumstance, when he had the face to beg Indulgence in the substance. And we are sufficiently lesson'd that it's better to address the Lord himself then the *Steward*, ever since the *Syrophaenician* met with such churlish treatment from the Disciples, and so gracious a Reception from our *B. Saviour*: such are some of our Church men, who lye bating at, and worrying of the Magistrate night and day, to exact the rigour of Conformity and the penal Statutes, as if all Religion were utterly lost, unless their *Circumstantials* were preserved Sacred and inviolable, whatever become of Gods *Circumstantials*.

The Title of this Chapter Modestly asserts onely thus much, that God lays very little stress upon *Circumstantials*: But the continued Tenor of his discourse labours to make it out, that he lays very little upon some of his own precepts, the True and clear

clear stating therefore of *Circumstantials* in the Question, would be above half way towards its Answer.

Under the Mosaic Law God commanded that they should offer to him the *זבחי*, *juge Sacrificium*, or the Daily Burnt-Offering: and in this case *the colour of the Beast*, (provided it was otherwise rightly qualified) was a *meer Circumstance*. Such as God laid no stress upon, and that Man had proved himself an Arditious, superstitious Busy-body that should curiously adhere to any one Colour: but for *the Heifer*, whose ashes were to make the water of separation, there the colour was no Circumstance, but made by Gods Command a *substantial part* of the service: to be *Red*, was as much as to be a *Heifer*; for when circumstances have once pass'd the Royal Assent, and are stamp't with a Divine seal, they become substantials in instituted Worship.

The Question then ought to have been, whether God have any regard to his own positive Laws; or whether he be so indifferent about his own institutions, that he lays little stress upon our obedience to them? But this had been too broad English, a little too uncivil for any that would carry fair correspondence with the Scriptures: and therefore let it be mollified, and stand as it does: Whether God lay very little stress upon *Circumstantials* in Religion?

In deciding this Question, he had done very ingeniously, and fairly to have told us from whence we are to take *the measures of that stress and weight*, which God lays upon these things; which because it was not for his Interest, yet may be much for the Readers, I shall endeavour to clear up these two things, first, from whence we *ought not*; and secondly, from whence *we ought* to fetch these measures.

[ 1. ] From whence we ought not to take the measures of the stress which God lays on them?

( 1. ) Then we ought not to judge that God has *little regard* to any of his Commands, because *the matter* of them abstracted from his Authority, is little; for we must not conceive that Christ sets little by Baptism, because the Element is plain fair water: or little by that other Sacrament, because the Materials thereof are common Bread, and Wine: nor to set them off, must we varnish them with pompous Pageantry, as if any thing were necessary to Buoy up their repute, or beget an awful Reverence to his Institutions, besides his Authority. For, 1.  
Though

Though the things *in themselves* be small, yet *his Authority* is great. As God appears great in creating little things, his power conspicuous in imploying little instruments to atchieve great effects, so is his Authority very glorious in enjoinning small observances: 2. Though the Things be small, yet God can bless them to great purposes. 2 King. 5. 11. *Naaman* was in a great Huff, that the Prophet should prescribe so plain, and mean a way for his Recovery: he expected some Majestick procedure in the Cure, that the Prophet should *come out, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord, and strike his hand over the place*. This had been something like! but to send him away ingloriously, with all that train, and bid him *Go wash in Jordan seven times*, was not to be endured by a Person of his rank, and quality. *Are not Abana, and Pharpar, the Rivers of Damascus better then the waters of Israel? may I not wash them, and be clean? And he went away in a Rage!* But we are to judge that to be best, which best reaches the End; *Healing Jordan*, then *ineffectual Pharpar*. 3. If the things be small, then the grace, and mercy conveyed by them, may be had at cheaper rates; And shall it be objected to Gods Ordinances, as their *Reproach*, which is their real *Glory*? *Baptismal water* may be had a thousand times cheaper, then the Popes *Holy-water*, shall that be it's crime, when 'tis a thousand times more useful?

(2.) Nor are we to judge that God lays little stresses upon his institutes, because he does not immediatly avenge the contempt and neglect of them upon the Violaters. And yet such is the unworthiness of Reprieved sinners, that they have formed one of their strongest Arguments for the Continuance of Corruptions in Gods worship, because he breaks not out upon them with present destructions. Eccles. 8. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the Sons of men is fully set in them to do evil!* whereas, 1. Such an Argument would equal conclude that God lays *very little stresses* upon Murder, Idolatry, Sacriledg nay *schism* it self. 2. God will find a time soon enough to reckon with all those who bolster up themselves in these presumptions, and take and unworthy occasion to be therefore *Bad*, because God is so *Good*: All the threatnings that are upon Record will certainly find out, and lay hold on the Despisers of his sacred institutions: And who to Accommodate their Doctrines to the Genius of the age, and humour the People with a Religion agreeable

agreeable to their Customs, must remember: *Math. 5. 29. Whosoever shall break one of the least of Christs Commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.* 3. God has not left himself without a witness that he is a *Jealous God*, in the matters of instituted Worship; for though *Nadab and Abihu* might plead that it was a small matter, a meer trifle what fire they used, so long as they kept close to the substance of the Command; yet God let them know, that he that offers *strange fire to the Lord*, may be consumed with *strange fire from the Lord*: and under the state of the Gospel, he has given such evidence of his Displeasure herein, as may justly alarm us out of our security. *1 Cor. 11. 30. For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.*

(3.) We are not to conceive, that God lays *very little stress upon his Institutions*, because we see a prophane and contemptuous generation of men lay little weight on them, except it be a load of reproach and contumely; for this were to measure God by the world, as those prophane wretches did, *Pf. 50. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest, that I was altogether such a one as thy self.*

As we must not think, that God appretiates whatever men set a high value upon; so neither are we to judge, that he disesteems any thing, because its grown out of fashion, and thereby exposed to contempt by the Atheistical wits of mercenary Writers. Our Saviour has told us, *Luke 16. 15. That what is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God.* And on the other side, what is of high account in the sight of God, may be depretiated by men.

If any of Christs Institutions seem necessary to be broken, it will be first necessary to decry them as poor, low, inconsiderable Circumstantials, and then to fill the peoples heads with a noise and din, that Christ lays little stress on them, and in order hereto, to call them the Circumstantials, the Accidentals, the Minutes, the Punctilio's, and if need be, the petty-Johns of Religion, that Conscience may not kick at the condemning of them.

(4.) Now may we conclude that God lays little stress on his positive Laws, because he is ready upon unfeigned repentance to pardon the violation of them, for thus we might conclude also, that he laid little stress upon murder and adultery, in that as soon as *David* had said, *I have sinned against the*

Lord

*Lord, the Prophet delivers him a sealed pardon, The Lord hath also put away thy sin, thou shalt not die, 2 Sam. 12. 13.*

(5.) Nor yet ought we to form such conclusions, that God lays little stress upon his positive Precepts, because he lays a greater stress upon moral precepts in themselves. As it would be an injury to conclude, that any Church lays little weight upon the observation of the *Lords day*, because, when one of his own instituted Festivals, is coincident with that day, the ordinary service thereof gives place to the proper service of that Festival, when all that can possibly by the wit of man be inferred thence is but this, that the Church may have a less respect for the one, than the other: so would it be injurious to conclude, that God has very little respect to his own Institutions, because he may suspend their exercise pro hic & nunc, rather than the duties imperated by a moral precept; Mint, Anise and Cumin, are inconsiderable things, compared with the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith; and yet our Saviour tells them, Mat. 23. 23. *These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.*

(6.) As absurd would it be to conclude, that God lays little stress upon Positives, because he disrespects the performance of a Duty in hypocrisie, for at this rate we may conclude that he lays little upon preaching his Word, Ps. 50. 16. *What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction?* And the Consequence is as natural, that God regards not prayer, because he hears not the petition of him that regards iniquity in his heart, Ps. 66. 18. *And that the prayer of him that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, is an abomination,* Prov. 28. 9.

(7.) Nor may we gather, that God makes little account of a positive precept, because he sometimes sees reason to indulge the omission of its practice for a season. What weight he laid upon Circumcision is well known, that he threatned Excision to the Male-child that was uncircumcised at eight daysold; and yet for forty years in the wilderness the act of Circumcising was suspended: for the acts of an affirmative moral precept may be forborn for sometime by our own prudence, and much more and longer by Divine warrant; and yet the Precept it self all the while stand firm in Gods regard, and in full force, power, strength and vertue to us.

(8.) We are not to conclude that God lays little stress upon

on an Institution, because he sometimes commands an Act, which, were it not for that *particular* and *special Command*, would by virtue of a *general Command*, be a most horrid impiety. Thus God laid a great stress upon *Killing*, much greater upon a father *killing a child*; and yet greater upon *offering human blood in Sacrifice*: and yet he commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his only son, and by his Command made that most acceptable, and rewardable service, which otherwise had been most abominable to the Divine Majesty. To borrow, and not to pay again, is one of the characters of a wicked person, *Pf. 37. 21.* And yet God by his special Command authorised the *Israelites* to borrow of the *Egyptians* jewels of silver, and jewels of gold; with no intent I am persuaded, to repay them either *use or principal*. God is the Sovereign and Absolute Legislator, who may suspend, rescind, alter his own Laws at pleasure, and yet he has laid such a stress upon the meanest of them, that *no man* may, nor any man, but *the man of sin*, dares presume to dispense with them, much less to dispense against them.

(9.) Nor are we to think that God lays little stress upon a Commandment, because he little regards those Observances, which Superstition, Folly, Tradition, Custom, have ascribed to it, which were never comprehended in it: yet such is the process of our *Enquirers* Arguments; he instances in *some superstitious Additament* to the Command, which God *never required*, and thence concludes very learnedly, that God lays very little stress upon the Command; let him therefore have leave to infer; God laid little weight upon the Observation of the Sabbath-day, because the superstitious *Jews* were haltered with an erroneous Opinion, that they were bound tamely to sit still, and offer their *naked throats* to their enemies *naked swords*, upon that Day, which folly indeed God little regarded.

[2.] Whence then ought we to take the measures of that stress God lays upon his Institutions?

(1.) The true measure of that respect which God has for a Commandment, is to be taken by us, from the Authority of God: if the thing be small, yet we are to regard his Authority in it, for this God regards: and therefore he has back't of old, both the positive and the moral precepts with this, *I am the Lord*; and the greatest instances of his Royal Prerogative are given us in those Mandates, which have only his Sovereign pleasure to recommend them to our observance.

(2.) The



(2.) The measure of that regard God has to an Institution, is to be taken from *the greatness of that glory which we give him in our obedience*. The great trial of our sincerity and subjection to God, lies in giving deference to his Will, as the Rule and Reason of our Obedience; and then do we recognise his Absolute Power to dispose of us when he will, whatever be the reason of it: is the reason of our Compliance. Thus Abraham gave God the greatest testimony of inward honour, when he prepared himself to sacrifice his only Son, upon his only Command.

(3.) We may take the measure also of the weight of a Command from its designed usefulness to his great ends; for seeing the smallest, and seemingly weakest of his Injunctions are attended with his Blessing upon the holy and due use thereof, we are thence to instruct our selves in the weight and worth of it.

The Enquirer tells us from Maimonides, that there were some things in the Jewish Law, that were *primæ intentionis*, such as God required for themselves, as being intrinsically good: others that were *secundæ intentionis*, only required for the sake of, and in order to the former: Now his own judgment herein he acquaints us with, in these words. *The first kind that were essentially good, were absolutely necessary, and could never be otherwise, such we call Moral duties; the latter kind were of so indifferent a nature, as that they might not only not have been commanded, but also in some cases having been commanded, they may not be a duty; but either he, or his Mr. Maimonides are quite out.* For, 1. The Acts of affirmative moral Precepts may in some cases become no duties, the Command it self abiding in its full force; yet none will say that God lays little stress upon the Acts of affirmative moral Precepts: thus the acts of affirmative positive Precepts may become no Duty, yet none can say, that God lays little stress upon the acts of Obedience to a positive Precept. 2. If this will prove that God lays little stress upon Positives, because *they are required only for the sake of, and in order to the former*: then it will evince, that God lays little stress upon all the means which he has appointed for his great ends: For the means, as they are means, are only valuable for the sake of, and in order to the end.

(4.) What stress God lays upon his positive Precepts, we may judge from those severities which God has threatened against, and sometimes executed upon the Violaters of them.

It was for the violation of a Ceremonial Law, *the Eating of the Tree of Knowledge, of good and evil*, that God ejected Adam out of Paradise: It was for the neglect of a Ceremonial affirmative Command, that the Lord sought to kill Moses, *Exod. 4.24.* And yet he had this to plead, that he was upon a Journey, and about Gods Errand. It was matter of meer Institution, that was the Israelites security against the destroying Angel, *Exod. 12. viz.* The sprinkling the blood of the Paschal Lamb upon the lintle and posts of the door. That many do escape Gods vengeance at present, notwithstanding their not obeying what God has instituted, and instituting what God has not commanded, will prove the admirableness of Gods forbearance towards them, who turn his Grace into Lasciviousness, and embolden themselves to sin from his patience, but not in the least that he lays little stress upon his own Precepts, whereof he will find a time to satisfy the Sons of Men, from whence,

§ 1. It follows, that he argues himself a pittifull Sophister, who concludes the least Command may be broken, because God turns not men to hell as oft as 'tis broken.

§ 2. He proves himself a notorious Hypocrite, that from either Gods grace in waiting or pardoning, shall encourage himself in sinning, and flatter his Soul that he may *curse God and live*, when the devil was more modest to suggest, *Curse God and die.*

§ 3. Whoever shall openly preach this Doctrine, that God lays little stress upon the Circumstantial of Religion, has open'd a flood-gate to let in a deluge of prophaneness upon the World: for seeing no Command of God is *small*, in respect of the Authority of the Law-giver, which is the formal reason of our Obedience to that Law; so no Command of God will be *great*, but that Command paramount, *de non-separando*: and then, if every Command that is *less than another*, may be said to have little stress laid on it; seeing there is such a gradation in the weightiness, this is in order to that, and that for another; there will but few, perhaps but one, of which it may not be said, *God lays very little stress on them.*

§ 4. Although the acts of positive Commands may give place to the acts of moral Precepts, when both cannot consist, yet whenever we can possibly perform both, we can omit neither without sin.

§ 5. To forbear the practice of an affirmative Precept, when Circumstances do not conspire, is no violation of such

a precept: though no evil may at any time be done, yet some good may at some time be forborn.

§ 6. In all Laws of this sort there are several *casus reservati*, cases kept in Gods own hands, which cases when they are put, the controvention of that precept *κατ' ἐνέργειαν*, is no violation of it *κατ' ἀδ' νομίας* • that is, some things seem to interfere with the Letter of the Law, which are allowed in the equitable construction of it; thus God commanded the Jews to do no servile work on the Sabbath, and yet in case of assaults from enemies, they might lawfully fight, without violation of the Law, or prophanation of the Day.

From what hath been said, the Reader may be furnish'd with an answer to those little attempts of the Enquirer, endeavouring to extort from us these two things; first, that God laid very little stress upon Circumstantials in the Old Testament: secondly, that he lays less weight upon them under the New.

[ 1. ] That God laid very little stress upon Circumstantials under the Old Testament, he proves;

§ 1. By the instance of the Jews, who have now generally received that Maxim, *Periculum vitæ dissolvit Sabbatum*, ( though they were a great while before they understood it, and soundly smarted for their ignorance. ) To which I shall need to say no more than, 1. This instance was as awkwardly applied as can be imagined; he would prove that things commanded may become no duty; and he instances in that which never was commanded. He undertakes to prove, that God lays very little stress upon a positive Command, and he brings an instance, that God lays very little stress upon their Superstitions. 2. I would seriously enquire of this serious Enquirer, whether God did really allow them the liberty of self-preservation and defence upon that Day? If he did, then it was their own superstitious ignorance, and foolish fancy that debarr'd them the use of their Liberty; if not, then, whenever they defended themselves they sinned; for sin is the transgression of a Law. And then let the Question be new modelled, whether God lay any stress upon sin? 3. If ever the Jews had such light into that Maxim, as to interpret it thus; the danger of life dissolves the Sabbath, that is, disannuls the Command, their light was gross darkness. And they ran from superstition to prophaneness, the common reel of those, who to avoid one extrem, run into the opposite. The true intent of the Maxim being no more than this, that Self-defence on the Sabbath seem'd to be a violation

violation of the *Holyrest* of the Day, but really was none; it being *casus reservatus*, an Exception, not from the Law, but in the Law; thus our Saviour, Mat. 12. 5. *Have you not read in the Law, that the Priests in the Temple prophane the Sabbath, and are blameless?* Now it cannot be, that a real prophanation of Gods Ordinance should be free from all blame; but the meaning is, that the Priests by vertue of their Office, were obliged to do such acts of bodily labour on that Day, which in their general nature were servile works; and as they had an appearance of prophanation in them, so they had really been so, had not the special Command of Sacrificing on that Day, secured them from the contracting of guilt by such bodily labour; wherein there was no violation of any Obligation, but only *Minor, & debilior obligatio, cessit majori & fortiori*; and for this he is loaden down with Authorities in our Synopf. Critic. in Loc. *Polluant non vere, sed improprie, & quoad speciem*. So Maldonate. *Violasse dicuntur, quia ea fecerint, quæ nisi cultus Dei excusaret facere non licuisset, opera nempe genere suo servilia; cujusmodi sunt Sacrificia maculare*: So Menochius; and Grotius fastens the interpretation with this Reason; *Quia licet polluant xpi pñes, contra legis tamen Dispositum, nihil admittunt*.

§ 2. But his fullest Instance is out of Master Selden; That in case of sickness a Jew might not only eat such meats as were otherwise forbidden, but (say they) for the recovery of his health, or avoidance of any great danger, he might break any precept, save only those three great ones against Idolatry, Murther, and Incest. The Answer to which is very obvious: 1. For the eating of meats for the recovery of health, which otherwise were forbidden. That word [otherwise] supposes them lawfull in this case, though not in other cases.

And is it not a learned Proof, that God lays little stress upon the violation of a Law, because he lays little upon that which is none? An exception in the Law, implies no violation of the Law. 2. That they might break any other precept, except one of those three great ones. Master Selden says, not only he says, the Jews say so; who were very favourable Casuists sometimes for their own ease and convenience: This was indeed a prophane gloss of the looser Rabbins, but no ways warranted by the Law giver: It seems they might swear soundly to recover their health, for that might open their pipes, if they were *Astmatical*; or commit adultery, *ad purgandos renes*, as the Popish Gloss hath it: and I once heard a Catholick Doctor advise his Patient in another case to be drunk once a month, though for some it must be once a

week, or 'twill not do: or they might lye, or steal, to procure a Sovereign Remedy, for these are none of the three great ones; either Idolatry, Murther, or Incest: And by this Rule, if Schism would any way have contributed to the avoydance of any great danger, they might have separated without sin.

But these instances he confesses come not home to his purpose, which I agree to; but withall tell him, they come as home as any of the rest, which now must undergo the penance to hear.

§ 1. His first Instance, that comes home to his purpose, is in the Passover. And the summe of his Reasonings from thence is thus much. This was a great Sacrament Instituted by God himself upon weighty Reasons, (perhaps to awe mens childish minds into a greater Reverence of the Deity) Made a Statute for ever throughout their Generations, and the Soul that observed it not, was to be cut off from among his People, Exod. 12. 11. And the most minute Circumstances are defined, amongst other, that they should eat it with Staffs in their hands, shoes on their feet, and their loyns girt. By which Expression is plainly intimated (and accordingly they understood and practised) that they should doe it in the posture of Standing; yet when they were come into the Land of Canaan, they eat it sitting, or lying, according to the usual Custom of Feasting in those Countries. And this change continued till the times of our Saviour without any reproof from God: And our Saviour himself conforms to them herein, and in the same posture eats the Passover with his Disciples: I shall onely offer these few things in Answer.

1. That there appears nothing in the Institution of a Command to eat the Passover standing; that which carries the greatest force of probability, is, that Gods enjoyed them to have their staves in their hands, and their shoes on their feet, that they might be ready for a March, at God Signal, and word of Command: which they might have, and yet sit at the Passover, unless it be such an impossible thng to sit with our shoes on; or that they could not hold their staves in their hands, as well sitting, as standing. 2. That the Jews understood, and practised accordingly is a precarious, groundless, and self-contradicting fiction: for what practise of theirs could possibly evidence that they understood the words to enjoin standing, when he confesses, that when they were come into the Land of Canaan, they eat it sitting or lying? unless he dreams of some such practise in the Wildernes, when there was no Passover. 3. Suppose a command for standing; yet it might be onely *pro hac vice*; whilst that posture might be symbolical of their hasty departure out of Egypt: And that sitting should

should ever after enure, when Providence should allot them more settled *Habitations*; A posture more accommodated to express the fixed condition of the Church in the Promised Land. 4. If God commanded them to eat the Passover *Standing throughout their Generations*, without any exception in the Canon of the Institution, without any dispensation from the Institutor himself, then they did most certainly transgress, were guilty of sin, continued in, lived in, dyed in sin, through all their Generations; for *sin is nothing else but a transgression of a Law*; and then our Blessed Saviour himself had transgressed his Fathers Law which he came to fulfil: And thus *Blasphemy* must be added to *Folly*, to make way for an Argument that may secure the Imposition of Ceremonies. I shall therefore conclude with more Reason thus; Christ eat the Passover in a *Table-gesture*, therefore God allowed it, rather than thus; God forbade sitting, and yet Christ sinned not, though he eat it sitting.

From hence I will thus Argue with our *Enquirer*: Either God commanded the Jews to stand at the eating of the Passover in all Ages, or not: If he did so command them, no cunning will excuse them from sin, who eat it sitting: If he did not so command, then this instance comes home to his purpose, just as his other did: for it can never prove, that God lays little stress upon Commanded *Circumstantials*, because he laid so little upon uncommanded ones.

*Positives* may be altered, changed, or abolished, by the Legislator when, and how far he pleases; but this will never prove that he lays little stress on them whilst they are not changed, not abolished: Nor will it prove that Man may chop and change, barter and truck one of Gods least *Circumstantials*, because the *Law-giver* himself may do it: He that may alter one, may for ought I know, alter them all, seeing they all bear the same Image and Supercription of Divine Authority; and he that has a commission to abolish one, I am confident has as good a commission to abolish all the rest, which none pretend to but the Pope, George Fox, and this *Enquirer*.

§ 2. His next instance which comes home to his purpose, is in David, who distributed the Priests into Orders for the conveniency of their ministrations: and besides that, he instituted Instrumental Musick to be used in the worship of God, without any commission from God that

*Appears:* But this instance is further from home than any of the rest. For, 1. That one word of his [*that Appears*] will destroy his whole Argument: For it was not simply necessary, that it should appear to us, at this distance of time, and under our present dispensation, That every Prophet, or pious Reforming Prince, had a commission in particular for every Alteration he then made in or about Gods worship: for seeing we know they had a standing Prohibition upon Record, not to Add to, or take from Gods institutions: it is supposed that they were Armed with such a commission, and received particular instructions from the Divine will, though the wisdom of God saw it not good to exemplifie those commissions and instructions; It was enough, that when God Authorized any such extraordinary Commissioners to Regulate the concerns of his Service, they produced their sealed Letters Patents to that age and people who were concerned to obey them.

2. *David* did not ordain Priests and Levites, he created no new Order or office, of his own head, and heart, all he did was this: seeing the whole Number of the Priests must attend upon the Sacerdotal, as the whole Body of the Levites upon the Levitical service, and yet all could not at once engage therein without confusion and distraction, he casts them into regular courses, that in successive Revolutions they might all share in the work and duty.

3. *David* was an eminent Prophet, who received directions from God in affairs of less moment, and as I cannot easily believe it, that God would call him to an employment without sufficient advice how to manage it, so neither can I conceive that so holy a Person would enterprise any thing of this Nature, without such advice, when he might so easily have it from God: And that which fully satisfies me herein, and may do as much for another, that is not highly concern'd to quarrel plain Scripture, is this, That when *David* had order'd the Levites, 1 Chron. 23. 4, 5, 6. And the Priests, ch. 24. And the Singers, ch. 25. And the porters, ch. 26. And the Captains and Princes of the Tribes, ch. 27. And was come at last to give his Son *Solomon* particular directions about the Temple, ch. 28. the Scripture tells us, ver. 12, 13. That *David* gave to *Solomon* his Son, the Pattern of the Porch, and of the houses thereof, and the Pattern of all that he had by the Spirit; Also for the Courses of the Priests and Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord:



Lord: And ver. 19. *All this (said David) the Lord made me understand in writing, by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.*

And as David had special direction from the Lord thus to distribute the Levites, Priests, Singers, Porters, for the convenience of their Ministration; so was he to make particular application to God, for the Determination of the most minute Circumstances: One would think that if there must be so many Divisions of Priests, Levites, Porters and Singers, it had been a most inconsiderable Circumstance, which of these divisions should begin the round, or circular Combination, that they might wink and chuse; and yet David used even in this punctilio, a great and solemn Ordinance of God, viz. *The Lot*, wherein the All-seeing and All-ruling God controuls the contingency of the voluble Creature, for when the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord, Prov. 16. 33. So that the very Porters and Singers were chosen as solemnly, and with respect to Gods Determination, to the order of their Courses, as Matthias was chosen to be an Apostle, and preferred to Barnabas by the decision of the true.

4. I will add, that it appears, that this Determination of David was not made *Jure Regio*, but *Prophético & Divino*. Because when that holy Prince Josiah set about Reformation, he regulates the Priests and Levites according to the order of David, 2 Chron. 35. He set the Priests in the Charges, ---v. 3. And he said unto the Levites, prepare your selves by the Houses of your Fathers after your Courses---According to the writing of David, King of Israel, which was that Writing no doubt, which he mentions, 1 Chron. 28. 19. By which God made him understand all those things: Now I would gladly learn what need this good and pious Prince had to have recourse to Davids pattern, to Davids writing, had he been acquainted with our new Doctrine, that God lays very little stress upon Circumstantials in Religion, and might have determin'd that small matter *Jure Regio*.

And this is farther evident, in that Solomon, a Prince of great power and wisdom, yet was so punctual and precise in this very thing, to order the Courses of the Priests and Levites according to Davids Rubrick, 2 Chron. 8. 14. He appointed also according to the order of David his father the courses of the Priests to their services; and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the Lord, as the duty of the Day required, for so had David the

man of God *commanded*. Where we may observe, first, that what *David* commanded herein, was not *as King*, but as the *Man of God*, a *Prophet*, or one *commissioned by God* for that service. And, secondly, that *David* could not bind his *Succeffors*, by any determination of his own, meerly as a Prince, and therefore their obligation to follow that pattern, did arise from the Authority of God.

5. Whereas our *Enquirer* has searcht, it seems, but can find no *commission* for *instrumental Musick*, I have sued out a *Melius inquirendum*, and he may read it exemplified, 2 *Chron.* 29. 25. *Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of the Lord, with Cymbals, and Psalteries, and with Harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the Kings Seer, and Nathan the Prophet; for so was the Commandment of the Lord by the Prophets; where we have a Commission express; 1. From whom, the Lord; by whom, the Prophets; to whom, King David; about what, instrumental Musick.*

6. And lastly, Supposing *David* had ordered all these particulars of his own head, yet will it not follow, that God lays little stress upon either the omitting what he has commanded; or the doing what he has prohibited, seeing he supposes, that the things ordered, were neither commanded nor prohibited: all that with modesty could be drawn from hence, would be no more than this little; That a meer circumstance undetermined by God, and yet necessary to be determined, to the executing what was determined, might be determined by a propheticall person: And even for this also he had an express, and punctual warranty from the Lord.

§ 3. A third Instance is from Sacrifices; which (says he) though God had with great solemnity instituted as the means of propitiating his Divine Majesty towards sinfull men, and had with great Accuracy prescribed the laws thereof, yet he puts a great slight upon all of that nature, as a thing he regarded not, in comparison of the substantial points of virtue and obedience. We have hence a great help to understand a little of our Authors mind, about those Circumstantials in Religion, which he says, God lays so little stress upon. And Sacrifices, the means of propitiating the Divine Majesty towards sinfull man, are of that number: and hence we may also satisfie our selves, why *Jesus Christ* has no more stress laid on him, in some mens Divinity; for seeing He is the means of propitiating the Divine Majesty towards sinfull man, he may prove a Circumstantial in Religion, and

and upon the matter an *insignificant*, or at best but a *significant ceremony*. But for his Answer I shall say these things.

1. It is a falshood very opprobrious to the great Law-giver of the Church, that he ever *instituted*, and yet *sighted* what he had instituted, whilst it *continued in force*. 'Tis true indeed, God always sighted *hypocrites*, who offer'd those Sacrifices, and they became *vain oblations*, as to any benefit they had from, or by them; but his own Ordinance he never sighted, till Christ the *grand Propitiation* had answered all their ends and pretensions.

2. God never sighted sacrifices, in comparison of virtue and obedience, for to offer sacrifices aright, was virtue and obedience; but in opposition to sincerity, to virtue and obedience: just as he would have sighted the most splendid outward acts of virtue and obedience without the heart, which is the life and soul of all. To give alms, to pray, were, and are duties of moral virtue and obedience, and yet when the Pharisees performed both to be seen of men, to hunt for popular applause, God not only sights but abominates them; not the acts themselves, but the persons that perform'd them; not what they performed, the outward work, but that they kept back the heart: or if the things yet not as commanded in specie, but as sinfully done in individuo. Thus he that commanded all men to kiss the Son, sighted, and abhorred Judas his kiss, when made a cloak to hide his traiterous design to deliver up his Lord and Master.

Sacrifices had a threefold use. 1. A typical use, as leading to Christ, and in this respect God was so far from sighting them, that he laid the greater stress imaginable on them.

2. A political use, to set the transgressor of the Law right in the Court of Justice, and to satisfy for the temporal punishment. 3. A moral use might be accidentally made of them too, they served well to represent some moral virtue, or duty. And I will not deny that God might sight this symbolical use of them. 1. Because that use had no institution, and we never find that God had any esteem of Symbols that were not of his own appointment. 2. Because no Ceremony or Symbol, could represent the moral duty, or virtue to that advantage, which the precept it self, with those encouragements and rewards propounded by God himself, were able to do.

Yet he will prove from Scripture, that God sighted sacrifices, Psal. 50. 8. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices; v. 14. Offer to

God the sacrifice of righteousness, as if he had said, let me have the latter, and I shall not much complain for the defect of the former. This is his Gloss, this his Proof; wherein I onely blame two things.

(1.) The falshood of it: The words may be interpreted as spoken either by way of concession, or commination. 1. By way of concession. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, q. d. *Quantum ad externa sacrificia satis estis occupati*, says a learned person. I have no cause to rebuke you on that account, for you do your duty, you are very diligent in them: God slights not sacrifice, but he requires a better sacrifice, that of Righteousness. 2. By way of Commination. And there is no greater argument of Gods displeasure, than when he threatens to leave a People without reproof for their neglect of duty; thus, *Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone.* Gods not reproofing for omission of a duty, or commission of sin, is a sorry Reason that God lays little stress either upon the duty, or the sin. Thus again, *Acts 14. 16.* God is said to have suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways. Gods keeping silence at, and non-reproof of sin, when once it shall be interpreted an indulgence of sin, his future rebuke in thunder and lightning, shall convince mistaken sinners of the folly of their comment upon the text of Gods forbearance. And this seems the true sense of the place we are upon. For *v. 21.* God uses parallel language; *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, but I will reprove thee.*

(2.) I blame his gloss of Blasphemy; he put words into Gods mouth which are the abhorrence of his Soul. *Let me have the latter, and I shall not much complain for the defect of the former.* Strange Doctrinethis! What, God not complain for want of obedience to his Commands? He told us in the beginning, that God was not a captious Deity, and now he would prove him one; he tells us that God instituted Sacrifices with great solemnity, as the means of propitiating his Divine Majesty, and now he introduces God of another mind: let them use the means or not, for averting his displeasure, God will not much complain.

§ 4. Another Instance is that mentioned, *Mat. 12.* Whereupon the occasion of the Disciples rubbing the ears of corn on the Sabbath day: and Christ justifying their fact from the example of David, who eat the shew-bread, in a case of extremity; Christ tells the superstitious Pharisees, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; but this will not do his work: For, 1. *The plucking of the*

ears of corn, in a case of extremity, was not forbidden by the Law; so *Grotius*, "Neque negat Christus, opus esse famulam, sed ex circumstantiis ostendit, factum hoc Discipulorum, legis sententia non comprehendi; est ergo *Questio*, τὸ ἐντὺ, ἡ τῶν δούλων, status scripti, & voluntatis; *Christ* denies not that it was a servile work, but from the due consideration of circumstances he proves, that this fact of his Disciples was not included in the meaning of the Law: So that the *Question* is between the Letter, and the equitable Construction of the Law. 2. The same Answer to the other Instance of *Dauids* eating the shew-bread. "Annon legistis? si legistis, hoc licitum esse didicissetis; si non legistis, putent vos ignavia vestra. Have you not read? (says Christ) If you have read it, you must needs have learned that this fact is lawful: If you have not read it, you may be ashamed of slothfulness. "David ejusque comites pari necessitate pressi, qua nunc premuntur Discipuli mei, fecerunt contra τὸ ἐντὺ, Legis de Panibus: neque tamen fecisse censentur contra τὸν δούλον. Sequitur ergo nec Discipulos meos quicquam hoc facto adversus legis sententiam committere, i. e. David and his companions, being urged with the same exigence wherewith my Disciples are now urged, acted against the letter of the law concerning the Shew bread; yet are they not to be thought to have transgressed the true intent, and meaning thereof; it follows therefore, that my Disciples by their fact have not violated the intendment of the law. 3. That our Saviour tells them he will have mercy and not sacrifice, has no difficulty in it, because, 1. Negatives are often put for Comparatives; I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, is no more than I will have mercy rather than sacrifice, when I cannot have them both. There's no question, but if an act of Mercy, and an act of instituted Worship, should stand in competition, all circumstances concurring; the act of instituted Worship ought to give place: we will suppose a Congregation assembled for the publick Worship of God, and at the same time a fire breaks out, the Church is not only allowed, but obliged to omit the publick Worship at present, and to employ their endeavours towards the quenching of the fire: and he will render himself somewhat more than ridiculous, that would infer from hence, that God lays little stress upon publick Worship; or that God lays less stress upon the Churches worshipping him in publick, than upon the preserving of a house; but only that the work of mercy must be now performed, or the season is lost for ever: whereas the Worship of God may

may be reassumed. So that all the business is, That a *circumstance of undetermined time is of less weight in Gods account, then an act of Mercy, or Charity, 1 Cor. 1.* The Apostle tells them, that Christ sent him *not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*; that is, not so much to baptize, as to preach; which yet will never enforce, that Christ lays little stress upon the Ordinance of Baptism: our B. Saviour, *Luke 4. 26.* acquaints his Disciples, *that he that hates not father and mother, cannot be his Disciple*; and yet its true too, that he that *hates his father and mother, cannot be his Disciple*: but by *hating* is meant only *less loving*; He that *loves not father and mother less than me, cannot be my Disciple*. Now let the Reader judge, how absurd it would sound in his ears, to hear such Doctrine. That God lays very little stress upon our *filial affection*, and duty to parents; a Doctrine worth its weight in gold to such a Jew, that would plead *Corban* against Commandment, and evacuate the Precept of God, by his own Traditions.

And sometimes that duty which God lays the *greater stress* upon, may give place *pro hic, & nunc*, to that which he lays *less weight* upon: a Father commands his Son to discharge such a service, as he is addressing himself to his duty, he finds his enemies *ox or ass ready to perish*; in this case, I conceive the Son ought to suspend the execution of his Fathers command to save the life of a beast: and yet *the debt of Justice* which I owe my Father, is greater then *the debt of Charity* which I owe an Enemy. And thus much of his Old Testament instances.

[2.] He proceeds now to those in the *New*, which must prove, that God lays little stress upon *Circumstantial*s under the Gospel, which he will first prove by this Argument.

If this (says he) *was the case, and condition of things under the Old Testament, where God seemed so punctual in his Prescriptions, so rigorous in his Animadversions, and where the danger of erring capitally from the design of those Institutions, by the least deviation from the line of Divine Revelations was so great*; then certainly in the *New Testament, where the Divine Wisdom hath express't far less concern for such little points*; may the minds of men be secure from such *superstitious fears*: wherein we must fairly axamin, 1. the Antecedent, 2. the Consequence, 3. the Reason of the Consequence.

(1.) The Antecedent, that God laid little stress upon *Circumstantial*s, that is, (as his Instances bear witness) had lit-

the regard for his positive Precepts under the Old Testament: Now how false this is, in any sense, which being true would subserve this main design, I think is pretty well cleared by this time, but the *Enquirer* like a good natured Man, fearing his Answerer should be so silly as not discover his weakness, has out of a prudent forecast refuted all his own Instances. For he tells us. 1. That *God seem'd to be punctual in his prescriptions*; 2. *Rigorous in his animadversions*. 3. That the danger of erring capitally was great. 4. Implies, that the least deviation from the line of Revelation, was an error. Now if all this be to lay a little stress upon them, I despair of ever knowing what 'tis to lay a great: when Clergy men are *punctual in their prescriptions*, telling us when we must bow, and when stand, when kneel, and when sit, when look this way, when another, when speak, when hold our tongue; when they are so *rigorous in their animadversions*, that to slip, or trip, to stumble, or grumble at Compliance, shall be an *Admonition thrice with a breath*, and a dreadful Excommunication at the end of all, when it shall be criminal, if not capital to deviate from the line of *Human Determination*; Dissenters are humbly bold to call this a laying very great stress upon Ceremonies.

(2.) His Consequence is, then certainly in the *N. T.* the minds of men may be secure from superstitious fears. O without peradventure, to see how strangely we have been out all this while! I thought verily the Question had been, whether God lays little stress upon Circumstantials under the Old Testament and the New? and we are now flamm'd off with this Conclusion, that we may be secure from superstitious fears, which is very true, whether Christ had instituted many Ceremonies or few; whether he had laid great, or little stress upon them; but all the policy of this lies in a crafty insinuation, which it's to be hoped the perfunctory Reader will swallow down, That all fears about displeasing Christ in the matter of instituted Worship, are but superstitious fears.

(3.) The Reason of his Consequence follows; because (forsooth) in the *N. T.* the Divine Wisdom has express'd far less concern for such little points. But I expected to be informed where Christ has express'd far less concern for these points; I do not know how 'tis possible to express far less concern, than a very little: But he that put words into the Fathers mouth so lately, may make the Son also speak what he pleases, and both of them to bear false witness against themselves.

But



But whereas this Argument proceeds thus; If God laid so little under the O. T. upon Positives, how much less under the New? I should invert his Argument, If God was so rigorous in his Animadversions, so punctual in his Prescriptions, when his Institutions were so numerous, his Prescriptions so *multiform*, what will he be when he has prescribed us so few, and those so *easy*, and *usefull* to the Observer? If we cannot be punctual in the observation of a *very few positives* of so plain signification, how should we have repined, had we been charged with a numerous retinue of Types, and carnal Rudi-ments? If Christs yoke be accounted heavy, how should we have sunk under the Mosaical Pædagogy? The servants of Naaman thus humbly expostulated with their Lord, 2 Kin. 5. 13. *My Father, if the Propbet had commanded thee some great thing, would'st thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean?* Suppose Christ had exacted of us, what Barchocheba exacted of his Disciples, that every one in token of absolute subjection should cut off his little finger; had it not been better *to enter into life maimed*, than having all our joints *to be cast into hell* for our disobedience; how much more then, when he has enjoyned us only *these few*, which are our *singular priviledge*, as well as our *unquestionable duty*? our *benefit*, not our *burthen*; and our *helps*, and not our *hindrances* in the way to everlasting felicity. The fewer are his institutes, the more punctual will he be in exacting Conformity to them; and therefore as the *last thing* Christ instituted *before his death*, was the *Ordinance of the Supper*, so the *last Command* he gave *before his Ascension*, was that of *Baptizing all Nations*, charging them to observe *whatsoever he had commanded them*.

If a tender and loving Husband, at the point of death should recount to his beloved Spouse, all the former evidences of endearing affections, and withall tell her he expected nothing in lieu of so great love, but that he might live in her memory, when he is dead and gone, by one only observation: surely the words of a dying Friend would live in the living Friend; and if there had been ever any true conjugal affection, it would operate strongly to be punctual in that single observance: our *B. Saviour*, when he was just ready to give himself a *price of Redemption for many*, institutes his Supper with the greatest punctualness imaginable; and being ready to die, commands all his faithfull Followers --- *Do this in remem-*

*br. vice*

brance of me. And is it not a hard case if his Church cannot afford to be tyed up precisely in *this one thing*? We read, Luk. 22. 14. That *Jesus sate down*, and the twelve Apostles with him, and v. 19. he *took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying τὸ ποιεῖτε, Do this in remembrance of me!* Now it's a great Question made by some, what should be the Antecedent, to this Relative [τὸ] and the Reverend B. Morton, a great Patron of Ceremonies, in his Treatise of the Sacrament, cites some Jesuits thus: [*Hoc facite:*] *ad omnes precedaneas Christi actiones refertur.* And as Chemnitius upon John 5. 28. Μὴ θαυμάζετε τὸν: Rectè (inquit ille) τὸν, *ad Totum Complexum eorum quæ hætenus dicta sunt refertur:* so say I; this Relative [τὸ] in the institution of that Sacrament, *ad totum Complexum eorum quæ hætenus dicta, & facta sunt refertur.* Do this, relates to the whole Complex of all those things which Christ had done before. And if so, then it includes *sitting down*: Or the application of our selves to the Table in a posture suited to a Feast; which agrees best with the celebrated Rule of decency, seeing there's no Nation under heaven shall kneel at their meals; yes (says that Learned Bishop) but I will except *Time*, and the posture of *sitting*; and excepting these two Circumstantials τὸ ποιεῖτε, is referred to all the rest. But then I would reply, 1. That there was no necessity to except *Time*; Because it neither was, nor possibly could be included in the Command, *Do this*: for all men that have any Ambition to speak congruously agree it to be non-sense, to say: that *Time can be done.* It must be *some action* here to which this τὸ ποιεῖτε, must relate. 2. If he will needs except the action of *sitting down*, I ask, *Quo warranto?* why should one Antecedent Action be excepted more than all the rest? And if one, why are not all the rest foreprised? The Papists have excepted the whole cup from the Laity: the Reverend Bishops have excepted *sitting*: and then why may not a third except *breaking*, a fourth, *Blessing*? and then come the Quakers, and the Learned Grotius with a *Non semper communicandum per symbola?* and shut out the whole institution: I confess I never liked these exclusions, ever since I saw first one parcel, and then another excluded, till at last there was a clean House: and thus by our Enquirers Maxime we have made a fine Sacrament of it, under pretence that Christ lays little stress upon Circumstantials under the New Testament: Little stress did I say?

Nay

Nay, *None at all.* For if God layed *very little* stress upon them under the *Old Testament*, and the Divine Wisdom has express'd *far less* concern for them under the *New*; I cannot guess, what *that something* should be that is *far less* then a *very little*, but a *meer Nothing*.

We should now examine his instances under the *New Testament*; but plenty has made him so poor, that he will give us *but one*; But one indeed; but that one is a great one, and may stand for *Many*: When (says he) the Apostle Paul had *vehemently* declaimed against the *Necessity of Circumcision*, and proclaimed the danger of it, as is obvious to any one that reads his *Epistles*, yet the same Paul *Circumcises Timothy*, to the intent that thereby he might render himself, and his Ministry more acceptable to the *Jews*. This is his one, his onely, great Instance out of the *New Testament*.

And it was but Reasonable that a person so polite, and terse in his style, should employ all the flowers of Elegancy to embellish it, and therefore for it's greater ornament, he will now use a Figure, which some by a hard Name call *Αντιστοιχία*.

It has been hetherto taken for granted by all that I have met with, that the Apostle *Circumcised Timothy* some good while before he wrote *any one of his Epistles*, and somewhat longer before he wrote those wherein he proclaims the danger of *Circumcision*. The first Epistle that he wrote was that first to the *Thessalonians*: And (not long after) the second to the same Church: The Postscripts to both which, Date them from *Athens*, where we find him *Acts 17*. But the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* judges, and I think upon clear grounds, that they were penned a year after, and written from *Corinth*. But whether from *Athens*, or *Corinth*, both must needs be written after the *Circumcision of Timothy*, which we find *Acts 16. 1*. In his journey to *Lystra* and *Derbe*: And the Learned *Estius* is of the same judgement with our own Learned Doctor: The Learned *Whitaker* also concurs thus far with them. Qu. 6. *contra Humanas Traditiones*: p. 415. *Novi Testamenti Canonem non fuisse tum editum cum Paulus hanc Epistolam ad Thessalonicenses scriberet*, (he speaks of the second Epistle written the same year with the former,) *imo ne ullos quidem N. T. libros tum fuisse scriptos affirmo*, excepto solo *Matthæi Evangelio* & (si *Irenæo credimus*) etiam *Matthæi Evangelio Antiquiores fuisse hæc dux*. If then these two Epistles were the first he

he wrote ; and they written from *Athens*, according to their postscripts, or from *Corinth*, as indeed they were, It's certain that they, and therefore *all the rest*, must be written some time after the *Circumcision of Timothy*.

Here is then a most desperate stumble somewhere or other ; unless he can prove, ( and what can he not prove ) that *St. Paul's Journey to Lystra and Derbe* was after his Journey to *Athens* and *Corinth*, which unless he shows himself a scorn to the Reader, he will not attempt.

The instance being so impertinent, we need not much be concern'd about the winding up of his conclusion: yet because some may have a mind to be pleasant, let us have it.

In which carriage of his he has beyond all exception demonstrated to us that all Ceremonial Appendages are perfectly subordinate, and ought to yield to the designs of Peace, Charity, and Edification, as the greater good: yes, this is Demonstration; infallible Demonstration! Demonstration that puts the Controversie beyond all exception, and the poor Non-conformists are siderated with the violence of it. And yet to speak plain *English*, here's nothing but pitiful trifling: For, 1. This Irrefragable Demonstration is reared upon a rotten Foundation; that *Paul* wrote his Epistles first, wherein he declaims against Circumcision, and then afterwards Circumcises *Timothy*. 2. All that he has built upon that Foundation is as rotten. That all Ceremonial Appendages are perfectly subordinate, and ought to yield to Peace, Charity, and Edification: let me observe,

§ 1. If these Ceremonious Appendages be so perfectly subordinate to those great ends ; then how will it prove that God lays very little stress on them ? Just as if some superacute Philosopher should undertake to prove, that because eating and sleeping are perfectly subordinate to Health and Life, therefore we ought to lay very little stress on them.

§ 2. If these Institutions of the Gospel which he calls Ceremonious Appendages, should at any time cross the great ends of Peace, Charity, and Edification, there's no doubt but that they ought to strike Sail, but he cannot prove that the meanests of Christs Institutions are opposite at any time to a just Peace, that they weaken Christian Charity, or hinder Edification: Nor can we suppose without the highest derogation to the Divine wisdom, That any of Christs means for Edification should ever overthrow their designed ends. Their subordination

to the end shows their inferiority to the end; but since Christ has allotted them their place, let no man dare to disturb their station.

§ 3. If *Divine Ceremonial Appendages* ought to give place and yield to Peace, Charity and Edification; then we may presume without presumption, that *Humane Ceremonial Appendages* shall be compelled to submit, and conform themselves to those great ends, and that none shall ever lay such a stress upon these as may endanger, much less destroy those glorious intendments. But here we are disappointed! God must lay little stress upon his, but they will lay incredible weight upon theirs. And as one said *παύσησίν με*: Let Heaven and Earth be blended and jumbled together in an eternal *Chaos*. It's a principle to be maintained to the Death, that no Ceremony ought to yield to the Recovery of Peace, the receiving of frozen Charity, and promoting Edification

And now to shut up all, and himself, and whole discourse out of doors, he recommends to us, *Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdom of God (that is, the Gospel) is not meat and drink, that is, consists not, or lays little stress upon those nice and perplexing matters, but in Righteousness, Peace and Joy*: whence some would be ready enough to infer that that Church which lays very great stress upon these nice and perplexing matters, is none of the Kingdom of God: And I shall only desire him to add for a close that Apostolical Golden Canon, *v. 20. For meat destroy not the work of God: do not by unseasonable using, much less by rigorous imposing things Indifferent, much less things doubtfull, and least of all, things sinful in their use, destroy Souls Created of God, Redeemed by Christ, and capable of Eternal Happiness; where God has Commanded, let him be obeyed, not disputed, not cavilled out of his right; and where God has laid little weight, let none make their little fingers an insupportable burden.*

## CHAP. VI.

*Whether the Magistrate hath a Authority to determine such Externals of Religion as are the Matters of our Dispute?*

**F***Abulam Auditor lege, Lecter audi!* When the Eagle, persecuted by the Beetle, could find no place of safe Retreat, she prudently deposite her Eggs in *Jupiters* Royal Lap, but he rather than endure the perpetual vexation about a Birds Nest, shakes them out of his Robe, and at once dash'd all the hopes of an Aiery of Eagles: Our Ceremonies have sometimes shelter'd themselves under the pretence of *Dé-cency*, and yet uuder that specious Covert could not be secure; thence they fled for Refuge into the Abstruse Receptacles of Venerable Antiquity, and Longæve custome. Yet from those Burroughs have they been hunted; The Churches Authority to judge of the Lawfulness, and to impose what she so adjudged Lawful amongst the numerous Tribe of Indifferencies was nextly pleaded, but upon more severe Re-searches into the Records, no such Commission can be found. At last therefore they have taken Sanctuary under *Constantine's* Purple; and when Princes shall be weary of protecting them against the pursuit of Scripture, they will fairly shake them thence also, and leave them to shift for themselves.

That the Persons, and Authority of Magistrates are most Sacred, *the one*, not to be toucht with common and unclear hands; *the other*, not to be profaned with Irreligious Breath, all Protestants must acknowledge: of which deep things, whilst we discourse, it will be seasonable to caution our selves from the Royal Prophet, *Psal.* 131. *Not to exercise our selves in great Matters, or in things too high for us.* Where though the Humble Lamb may safely wade, the Castle-bearing Elephant must be forced to swim.

I look upon the extent of the Princes power to be as far beyond my Reach as the *Primum mobile*; which though I can neither touch, nor measure, yet may say, there is a Being beyond it: Thus though it were unpardonable boldness to Determine its bounds, or say, *Thus far shall it go, and no farther,*

yet a truly loyal heart may conceive, and a modest tongue express, *there is a God above it.*

That the Magistrate is *Custos utriusque Tabulae*, the great *Fiduciary of Gods Law*; is not so much a *Confession* extorted from us by rack of Scripture, as our triumph that he is so, rejoycing in it with thankfulness to the Almighty, who has made him a *nursing Father* to his Church.

To preserve Worship of God in purity, and his Worshipers in peace, is a flower of the Crown Imperial, which adorns the Royal Diadem far more than all its own Diamonds and Rubies, and gives him a more orient lustre, that he serves *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, than if he had grasped the universal Monarchy, and brought mankind to adore his footstool.

As no forreign power can justly pretend to intermeddle with his Government at home, so no person of whatever Character at home, ought to own a dependance upon any forreign Potentate abroad. Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers; upon which wordsholy Bernard thus, *Si omnis anima, ergo & vestra: Quis vos excipit ab universalitate? Qui tentat excipere, tentat decipere.* If every soul, then yours also (ye Ecclesiasticks,) for who made you an exception from the general Rule? the Pope that would exempt you from your Sovereigns Jurisdiction, does but expose you to the indignation of God.

What is the *ne plus ultra*, the most extent of this power in Civil and Religious concerns, for such pitifull Creatures as we are to determin, were at once to discover our folly, and betray our pride: and yet we may say without offence, though Princes are called Gods, they shine with borrowed beams from the Divine Majesty, the fulness of whose power is incommunicable: and propriety with Law in the former case and God with Conscience in the latter, will go as near to the shoars, that shall terminate this Ocean, as any two things that shall measure with them for exactness.

There are two sorts of Persons, that fancy they have laid an eternal obligation upon Princes, beyond all possibility of requital: The first are they who would entitle them to an absolute right to, and dominion over the possessions of their Subjects: The second, they would make them sovereign Lords of Conscience: Thus the great Hooker, *Eccles. Polity*, p.26. *In litigious and contraverted causes, when they come by authority to be*



be determined, it is the will of God that we should do accordingly, though it seems (yea, perhaps truly seems) in our private judgment or opinion, it's utterly disallowed by the Law of God. And yet these men are truer friends to their own interest than the Princes in this matter; for whilst they deck his Atchievements with Titulado's, impracticable, useles and cumbersome Regalities, they are sure to make provision for themselves, and wisely lick their own fingers: for thus it has ever been the cheap way of Church-men to sell shadows for substances; as his Holiness sells the shred of a lamb-skin to an Arch-Bishop for a thousand pound sterling, and a consecrated Rose for more than his whole Belvedere is worth.

When the Enquirer then is so zealous to become the Princes Champion in spirituals, I hope he understands on which side his bread is butter'd, and will speak two good words for himself, whilst he speaks one for the Magistrate; and when he has a little reproach'd others, and magnified his own sincerity in this undertaking, he wipes his mouth decently, strokes his beard gravely, and reasons most profoundly upon these two heads.

[1.] That the Magistrate exceeds not his commission, when he interposes for the Determination of the Circumstantial of Religion.

This Proposition thus loosely hung, may be owned or disowned according to every mans humour: Dissenters may subscribe it, without the least prejudice to their Cause, or reflection upon their Practice; and they may deny it too when they have done, without fear of self-contradiction, or danger of entrenching upon the Magistrates Authority. For, 1. What must we understand by [interposing.] If I might freely deliver my own private opinion: It's lawfull, nay expedient, nay necessary, that he interpose, or else I am afraid his poor Dissenting Subjects will be worried to death: But they who plead so zealously for his interposing, when that interposition is not tempered to their good liking, make the vault of Heaven echo again with their clamours, that the distressed Church is quite undone. In a word. If Church-men will be determining one thing after another, that we can see no end; new Subscriptions, new Oaths, new Jestes, new Ceremonies, Superconformity to the Canon above Law, and Practice above Canon, what will become of the simple-hearted Laicks, if a vigilant and prudent Prince do not interpose, and timously de-

*termin* upon their Determinations. 2. I now utterly despair of understanding his meaning of *Circumstantials*; a word that has run through as many shapes as are in all *Ovid's Metamorphosis*; and amongst all the pleasant stories in that ingenious Romance, I remember one that the Reader will not condemn for impertinent.

There was one *Ezifichthon*, whose *βελμιά*, and extream voracious stomach had no other supply at last, but from one daughter; Now this Mademoiselle (you must know) had a singular faculty to transform her self into any shape she pleased: once he sold her for a round sum, and she came trotting, or ambling home again (for she had all her paces) in the shape of a bonny filly; another time he sold her, and received his money honestly for her, and she came home in the shape of a Milch-Cow. Such another ambiguous, versatile Creature is this [ *Circumstantial*. ] If we should say, the Magistrate has no power to determin *Circumstantials*, presently he's oth' top oth' house: what an obstinate Generation are those Fanatics! What, will you not allow your Prince to appoint where you shall assemble for your publick Worship of God? Must he have no concern in *time* and *place*, in order to the securing of the Peace? Yes, yes Sir! withall our hearts, and we shall be heartily glad on't, humbly thankfull for it, and honestly proud on't too; and I would we could prevail with our *Enquirer* to be our *Sollicitour*, to procure us a Determination of those *Circumstantials*: Well then (says he) you agree the Magistrate may determin *Circumstantials*, but such are the *Ceremonies*, and now you are in a nooze, get out again how you can.

3 Therefore he should have resolved plainly whether the Magistrates Commission extends to the Determination of *all*, or only some certain Circumstances; and my Reasons are these. 1. If he have not a Commission to determin *all*, then the Question will recurr, *whether it reaches those under debate?* for thus he argues. *Circumstantials* may be determined by the Magistrate; but *Ceremonies* are *Circumstantials*; therefore *Ceremonies* may be determined by the Magistrate: Now if the *major* in this Syllogism be not *universal*, the Syllogism is peccant in *form*; if it be, then deprecating the displeasure of those whom we truly honour in the Lord, and for the Lord we humbly deny it. All *Circumstantials* may not be determinate by the Magistrate; for,

for, 2. Christ has already determined of *some Circumstantials*, and whoever makes it one, it's no question with me, that no Power on earth can *undetermin*, or *otherwise determin*, what God has already *fore-determined*. 3. There are *some Circumstantials* which cannot *profitably*, and therefore not *lawfully* receive an universal, and uniform Determination. 4. Because, if all undetermined Circumstances may be determined in *their use*, the life of man may be made the most wretched, miserable, and undesirable thing in the world; and he had as good preach that other more eligible, and more edifying Doctrine, *Ita, & de te literam longam facito!* for where should the most cautious foot tread besides a share? And such is the condition of Superstitious Papists, whose consciences are perpetually perplexed with endless scrupulosities about those minutes which the Church has made *sin*, which else had been as innocent in offensive things as a piece of powdred Beef and Turnips.

Now for the proof of this Doctrine, he tells us, *It has been so fully, and substantially done by the incomparable Hugo Grotius, and by a late eminent Divine of this Church, that it's enough to refer the Reader to them.* Indeed he must be an incomparable person that can write *Substantials* about *Circumstantials*; but I confess I do not build much either upon the authority, or reasonings of the otherwise incomparable Hugo, ever since I read his dangerous Discourse, lib. 1. cap. 4. §. 13. *de Jure B. & P. Si Rex habeat partem Imperii, partem alteram Populus, aut Senatus; Regi in partem non suam in volanti, vis justa opponi poterit; quia eatenus Imperium non habet; quod, locum habere sentio, etiam dictum si sit, Belli potestatem penes Regem fore: id enim de bello externo intelligendum est; cum aliqui quisque partem summi Imperii habeat, non possit non jus habere eam partem, tuendi, quod ubi sit, potest etiam Rex, suam Imperii partem, belli jure, amittere;* that is, *If a King hath one part of the sovereign power, and the People, or Senate the other part; If the King shall invade that part which is none of his own, just resistance may be made against him, because so far he hath no Authority at all; which I judge to hold true, although it be said, That the power of making war is in the King, for that must be understood of a foreign war; whereas otherwise, whoever has a share in the Sovereignty, cannot but have also Authority to defend that share; which, when it so falls out, the King may lose by the right of war his own share of the Sovereignty.* Here is dangerous Doctrine, enough to cure me of my ambition of ever being a Hugonot.

As for that late eminent *Divine* of this Church, who has so convincingly asserted this power, I cannot divine who it should be, unless perhaps that long-winded Author, with whose Elucubrations some are resolved to vex the Fanaticks, though they never read him themselves. And therefore leaving these voluminous Authors to scold it out with their own mouths, let us attend to the Enquirers more concise Reasonings.

( 1. ) It's certain (says he) that Magistrates had once such a power in the Circumstantials of Religion, and that in the Old Testament. It is certain indeed that they had a power, not only in the Circumstantials, but the Substantials of Religion; all the Question is, whether they had such a power as he pleads for; and if they had it, then whether they had it, *jure Regio*, or *Prophetico*? whether in their own Right as Kings, or by Delegation in some extraordinary case from God?

§ 1. The Prince might have, nay he had a power to stir up, and quicken the lazy Priests and Levites to their duty, and yet no power to create them a duty; He had power to punish Church-men, to restrain the exorbitances of the Clergy, and for male-administration to cashier them, nay, to order the High-priest himself, if he proved factious, seditious or rebellious, and endeavoured any alteration of the Theocracy, either in Church or State, but he had no power to make new Administrations; He had a power to restore the corrupted Worship to its primitive integrity, but he had no power to institute Worship; and therefore its more than ridiculous to argue from a power, to such a power.

§ 2. He pretended to prove, That the Magistrate in determining these Circumstantials, did not exceed his Commission; and his medium is from the Jewish Magistrate. Now his proper, direct, and easie way to have evinced that the Jewish Magistrate had this power, had been to have exemplified the Commission it self, and not stand trifling with matter of fact, to prove matter of right, especially seeing that the Commission is upon record; and many doubts in law will arise from the fact, as whether what was done was done *jure*? and if *jure*, then *quo jure*? Now for the Commission from him by whom Kings reign, it was ready drawn of old, & lay a blank left to insert the name of that particular person, whom God immediately or by succession should chuse, Deut. 17. 18, 19, 20. It shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of the Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book out of that which is before

the Priests, and Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law, and those Statutes to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his Brethren, that he turn not aside from the Commandment, to the right hand or to the left: to the end he may prolong his days in the Kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel: from whence 'tis evident, that though the Israelites were for some time in their minority govern'd by Judges, yet when their Nation should grow up to its greatest perfection, God would then bestow upon them the most perfect form of Government, viz. Monarchy, and in the most perfect manner continue it, viz. by Succession, not impeaching his own Prerogative to alter either the form or the time, but with a negative upon any, or all the People, so it is as plain, that God ties up his Prince to govern by the *משנה החדשה* the Deuteronomy, a Copy of the Laws and Statutes moral and positive, without turning to the right hand or the left, in excess, or defect, mangling, or mending of Gods Laws. Allowing to himself still a power to vary, but not add to them save by his direction.

§ 3. This great proof for the Magistrates power over the Circumstantial of Religion, is fetcht from the Magistrates power in the Jewish Common-wealth; he that is so severe upon the Non-conformists, that they are Judaizers, if they argue but *a fortiori* from Moses to Christ, now takes his greatest proof from David to the Christian King, and though it be scandalous for them to reason from that Topick in Doctrinals, yet is safe and honourable for himself to reason thence in Politicals, and Ceremonials, his Instances come now to be considered.

§ 1. David (as I shewed before) altered some things, and instituted others in the Temple worship. That's his Instance: and David (as I proved before) altered nothing, instituted nothing, without special direction from God, that's my Answer: which special Warrant when it shall be produced for any Alterations of, or Additions to Christs Institutions under the Gospel, they shall by me be most cordially embraced.

§ 2. Hezekiah (says he) without a Scripture for it, brake the Brazen Serpent to pieces, though it was a symbolical Ceremony of Gods own Institution. Oh, but if Hezekiah had set up one brazen serpent as a symbolical Ceremony, without Gods Institution, it had been more to his purpose, than if he had broken a hundred. Let him take these few things along with him, and then make the best he

can of his Instance. 1. If *Hezekiah* needed no Scripture warrant to destroy an old antiquated *Institution of God*, because it had been, and still was abused to idolatry, much more may a Christian Prince without further Scripture warrant abolish such *symbolical Ceremonies*, as being originally the meer inventions of men, have been, and still are abused to the most foul Idolatry, and grossest Superstition that ever was in the world. 2. Let the *Enquirer* recollect himself a little. He undertook to prove that Princes have power to set up Ceremonies, and his Instance proves only thus much, that they have power to pluck them down. 3. *Hezekiah* needed no Scripture to empower him to destroy the brazen Serpent, because it was then no *Institution of God*: It had been once indeed a temporary appointment of God, but the ceasing of the end was the determination of the use; when its sacred relation ceased, it was of no more value in Gods account when *Hezekiah* broke it, than so much brass. 'Tis not true therefore that *Hezekiah* broke in pieces the brazen serpent, though it was, but though it had been formerly an Institution of God. He did not make it, but declare it, to be *Nehushtan*, an old relique, made a new idol, and now served as it deserved. 4. I do not understand that the brazen Serpent was a *symbolical Ceremony*, what grace, what duty did it signifie? A type it was, to direct their Faith to Christ for that time, to expect the healing of their Souls from him, but the visible Service was only to heal their bodies stung with fiery serpents, *Joh. 3. 14. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* 5. *Hezekiah* had Scriptures more than one, not only to enable, but command him to do it. He needed no new Authority, but new Wisdom to apply an old general Command to a particular case. If the *Enquirer* could but shew as much Scripture Warrant for the setting up one Ceremony, as *Hezekiah* had for destroying a thousand Idols, he would think himself a jolly fellow. I might urge his authority from the second Commandment, where God declares himself a jealous God in the matter of instituted Worship, and how many following Generations might smart for the prevai-  
 ration in that particular, he well knew: There might have been a drachm of the brazen Serpent, as well as an ounce of the golden Calf, in their subsequent calamities, if he that was *Custos atriusque Tabule*, and now had not his name for nothing, had not testified against that abomination: But I shall crave leave to remember him of the incomparable *Hugo*, who upon this fact

of Hezekiah thus. *Egregium documentum Regibus, at quamvis bene instituta, sed non necessaria, ubi ἐμπροσὶ male usurpantur, è conspectu tollant, ne ponunt offendiculum cæcis; A notable lesson to all Kings, to remove out of the way such things, however at first well instituted (yet not at present necessary) when they are commonly abused, that they become not a stumbling block to the blind.* Where we see the incomparably quick-sighted Hugo could find a Scripture to justify Hezekiah, and yet it was very far fetcht, from Deut. 27. 18. *Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.* And yet he has a clearer vindication of Hezekiah's fact from Scripture; where speaking of their burning Incense to the brazen Serpent, he thus expresses himself. *Quod inter illa erat quæ Dei solius honori reservata, extra templum, usurpari non licebat. Which (Incense) being in the number of those things, which were peculiarly appropriated to the Worship of God, might not be lawfully used out of the Temple, Exod. 30. 38. Who-soever shall make like unto it to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.* But what need all these Circumlocutions, when God commanded his People, Exod. 34. 13. *To destroy the Altars, break the Images, cut down the Groves of the Nations, for that he is a jealous God.* That wise and discerning Prince could easily see the Command reacht all the instruments and utensils of Idolatry, especially those found amongst his own People, his People in Covenant, for whom thus to transgress, was to provoke him to his face.

§ 3. But his great Instance is from Hezekiah's celebrating the Passover otherwise then God had commanded, and in that one fact he finds several branches of his variation from the first institution.

As, (1.) He caused the Passover to be kept by all Judah, and Israel on the second month, though it was not according to the Divine Institution, but done by the advice of his Council upon pious and prudential considerations, 2 Chron. 30. 5. Old Objections must be content with old Answers.

[1.] Hezekiah had sufficient warrant from the Word of God to celebrate the Passover at that time, pro hac vice, the people being under those circumstances, Numb. 9. 10, 11. *If any man of you shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the Lord. The fourteenth day of the second month at even shall they keep it.* That we may reach the full intendment of this Deuteronomy, or after Law, we must carefully attend to the occasion of it. In v. 6. *There were certain*



certain men that were defiled by a dead body, that they could not keep the Passover on that day, the day of the Institution; this was a case seeming inconsiderable, and such whereon our Enquirer would have laid very little stress, made no bone of it, being a circumstantial, a nicety about the time; but the people being more conscientious, brought the case to Moses; and he found it so weighty that it needed the resolution of God himself, v. 8. Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. Why, what needed that? had he not all Kingly power within himself? had he not his Counsel of the seventy two? might he not have first determined it to be a Circumstantial, and then have determined what he pleased about a sorry Circumstance? or was he so meanly instructed in the extent of his Royal Authority? and how little stress God laid upon these Circumstantials? well, nevertheless he will consult the Lord for a Determination of the case; whereupon God gives him that Command which we have already heard, v. 10, 11. wherein I observe. 1. That though that Question was propounded only concerning that particular case, of a person unclean by a dead body; yet the gracious God, who well knew, that many other incident cases of the like nature would emerge out of the various providences which they would come under in after times, and that they would still be at a loss for resolution about their Duty therein. Answers also concerning him that was in a journey, or far from home; which Philo understands, *De peregrinatione in Regionem à Judæa longe distitam*; the very case of the ten Tribes in Hezekiah's time. 2. That under these enumerated particulars, of being defiled by a dead body, or in a journey, were comprehended all other irregularities, which might render them uncanonically meet to observe the Passover: *Ita statuit Philo, (says our Synopsis) quia eadem est ratio omnium.* There's a parity of reason, which reaches all other cases: This then was the case of the ten Tribes, they were afar off, kept from the Worship of God by many pressing circumstances, for which God in this provisional Post-law had taken care: and for Judah, they were defiled, all things out of course, Worship decayed, the Temple polluted, Sacrifices neglected, and universal disorder, and therefore under the case of defilement by a dead body, God makes provision for them also, for *eadem est ratio omnium*: thus, v. 3. They could not keep it at that time, because the Priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, "*Impedimentum*" "*hic erat illi simile, nempe justum, illi enim dies mensis pri-*"  
"mi,

“mi, ( quibus Phafe erat observandum ) Templo expurgando consumpti sunt : And both Protestants, and Papists, *Juniu, Piscator, Estius, Lyra, Martyr* vindicate *Hezekiah's* proceedings from that general Law, Num. 9.

[ 2. ] Whereas the Enquirer would insinuate, that the King did all this by the advice of his ( privy ) Council, he may know that there was another Council of more authority in the concerns of Religion, which being appointed by God himself, might more reasonably have been consulted; once more I will hear *Grotius, de Jure Belli & Pacis, lib. 1. cap. 3. §. 20.* “*Hæc cum ita sint, tamen aliqua judicia Regibus adempta, arbitror mansisse penes Synedrium 70 virum, quod divino imperio, à Mose institutum ad Herodis tempora perpetua cooptatione duravit; itaque & Moses & David judices, Deos vocant, & judicia vocantur judicia Dei, & judices dicebantur non humanâ, sed Divinâ vice judicare; imo aperte distinguuntur res Dei, à rebus Regis; 2 Chron 19. 11. Ubi res Dei, monentibus doctissimis Hebræorum, judicia ex lege Dei exercenda, intelligi debeant; Although these things be thus, yet I conceive that some judicial matters, excepted from the Kings cognizance, were under the jurisdiction of the Sanedrin, which being instituted by Moses, at the Command of God, indured in a continual succession, to the days of Herod: and therefore both Moses and David call the Judges ( of that Council ) Gods; and their judgments are called the judgments of the Lord; and the Judges are said to judge not in mans name, but in Gods. And hence is it that the matters of God, and the matters of the King are apparently distinguished, 2 Chron. 19. 11. Where by the matters of God ( as the most learned of the Jews inform us ) we are to understand the determining of Cases out of Gods Law: And thus also the same Grotius upon this place. Ad. v. 2. The King had taken counsel, and his Princes, and all the Congregation in Jerusalem; id est, inquit Grot. συναγωγῆς μετὰ αὐτοῦ. And the meaning is plainly this, that the King and his Princes, ( or his Counsellors ) advised with the Sanedrin, whether it were lawfull in this exigency, for both Judah, and Israel to keep the Passover in the second month, by vertue of that Declaration of God, Num. 9. And the Court did agree in the affirmative, Nemine contradicente.*

[ 3. ] But let us suppose the worst that can be imagined, that *Hezekiah* had varied from the Canon of the Institution, yet did he make a Canon that they should transgress it for ever? Suppose,

Suppose, that in a perplexed time he kept it once on the *second moneth*, when necessity, an old evil counsellor (when not directed by Gods Word) stood at his elbow, and had his ear; yet did they not everafter observe it on the first month, if he brought Judah to Israel at this time, Israel must come up to Judah at other times: Men may turn the stream of Gods Institutions which way they will, but they will find their old channel again in time: Truth was before Errour, and it will be after it; and therefore both King and People, when the reason of this seeming irregularity ceased, ceased their practice; but will this justify any to take any Ordinance, from its proper Hinges, and force it to turn for ever upon other Centers?

This was indeed the great transgression of Jeroboam, in Divine Worship, 1 Kin. 12. 32. Who ordained a Feast in the eighth moneth, on the fifteenth day of the moneth, like unto the Feast that is in Judah, ---Even the month that he devised of his own heart. 'Tis true, he was a person obnoxious upon many other accounts, guilty of other superstitions and encroachments upon Gods Authority, and yet the Scripture takes special notice, and severely brands him for the altering of the month, the circumstance of time, without better warrant than he had from his own heart, or the Regal Authority.

[4.] Still admitting that this was done besides the primitive Institution, or the warrant of that After-law, yet still the Prophets of the Lord were in Judah, with whom in extraordinary cases, both King, Princes, People, and great Council might advise; and must we needs think, that so prudent, so pious a Prince would run upon his own head, in a matter of such concern, when he might so easily have received particular instructions from Heaven?

[5.] Supposing still more than all this comes to, that his practice was besides the primitive pattern, not warranted by Num. 9, that he had no lawfull direction from the Sanedrin, nor from any of the Lords Prophets, (which yet can never be disproved) but that he made this alteration meerly *Jure Regio* (which can never be proved) yet did he not set up any one Mystical Ceremony, appointed no other Worship, part of Worship, means of Worship, only he determined of the time for that once; which though it had been a presumption too high for the greatest Prince to attempt, (as the case then stood) yet it came far short of

of appointing *new Institutions, or Symbolical Ceremonies.*

(2.) A second branch of his variation from the primitive Pattern, he gives us from v. 17. *Where he appointed the Levites to kill the Passover, which by Gods appointment was to have been performed by the people themselves; wherein he supposes, that by the Institution, the people ought to kill the Passover; that Hezekiah, non obstante that institution, appointed the Levites to do it; that he did this without Divine direction, and yet was perfectly innocent in what he did.*

§ But, 1. Whether by Gods appointment the Paschal Lamb was to be slain by the People, or the Priest, is a question that has been ventilated by no small Names: and though it seem most probable, that the people were entrusted with that service, yet the grounds are too weak; the train of Consequences too many and intricate, for a wise man to erect a superstructure of that height, & weight upon it, that Princes may from thence dispense with Gods Law.

They that hold that the Master of the Family was not commanded to slay it in his own person, do urge, *Exod. 12. 27. It is the sacrifice of the Lords Passover.* And if a Sacrifice, then to be performed by a Priest, and whereas it is said, ver. 6. That the whole Assembly of the Congregation of Israel should kill it, they answer, *jugulent, id est, jugulari curanto, nempe per Sacerdotes.* That their killing was no more than their taking care that the Priest should kill it.

As to my own private judgment, I conceive, that the Master of every Family was a Priest within his own Temple, and did perform that Service according to the primitive Institutions; but that, as soon as God had chosen out the Family of Aaron to minister unto him in that holy Employment, all the powers that lay dispersed, and scatter'd up and down particular families, were thereby united, and devolved upon that family which God had called. And that this, notwithstanding the people in this, as well as other Sacrifices, had some hand in the oblation of it.

*Abarbinel* reckons up ten things in a Sacrifice; five of which he assigns to the people. 1. To put their hands upon the head of the Sacrifice. 2. The killing it. 3. The taking of the skin. 4. The dividing it into parts. 5. The washing of the Entrails. The other five he allots to the Priests. 1. To receive the Blood in Basins. 2. To sprinkle it. 3. To kindle the fire on the Altar. 4. To order the wood. 5. To take the parts of the flesh that were sacrificed.

§ 2. Whe-

§ 2. Whether *Hezekiah* Commanded the Levites to kill the Passover against the Rule of the Institution? is yet another Question. For, 1. It's the judgment of some, that in *Hezekiah's* Passover the Levites did not Personally kill the Lamb, but onely deliver it into the hands of the Priests to be killed. So *Menochius*: *Existimo rem ita peractam esse, ut populus Immundus, Agnos Levitis darent; Levita ad Sacerdotes afferunt, qui eos immolarent, I conceive, (says he) that the matter was thus transacted that the people being unclean, delivered the Lambs to the Levites, who handed them to the Priests, and they slew, and sacrificed them.* 2. It seems more probable that the Levites did actually slay the Passover, as also those other Sacrifices: Chap. 29. v. 34. And in justification hereof I affirm, that if it was besides the order of the first institution, yet it was agreeable to the after Determination of God himself, and that whatever concern the Levites had therein, it was appointed them *jure Divino, non Regio*. And if so; then how will it evince, that the Prince had this power over Gods institutions, because God had such a power to alter, and change the first institution according as he in wisdom saw good?

Now that whatever Change was made, was wholly by the Command of God, I think will be evident from these Scriptures, 2 Chron. 35. 3, 4, 5, 6. And (*Josiah*) said unto the Levites—Serve now the Lord your God, and his People Israel, And prepare your selves by the House of your Fathers, after your Courses, according to the writing of David King of Israel, and according to the writing of his Son Solomon——— So kill the Passover and Sanctify your selves, and prepare your Brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses. Now hence it's evident, that the Levites in killing the Passover acted according to the writings of David, and Solomon: which writings must necessarily be one and the same, and both of them received from the Lord, 1 Chro. 28. 19. Where David protests: That the Lord made him understand all this, in writing by his hand upon him: 2. It's plain also that good *Josiah* aimed at this one thing in all he did, that all might be done according to the word of the Lord by Moses, and then either the Levites must be judged to have the same power by the Command of Moses, or else that no subsequent Disposition of affairs otherwise by the Authority of God could be adjudged contrary to what he had Commanded by Moses. 3. It is plain also that *Josiah* had no respect to *Hezekiah's* practise

practise as the Reason of his own, because he quotes not the practise of *Hezekiah*, but the writings of *David* and *Solomon*, so false it is what the *Enquirer* so confidently asserts, that *Hezekiah* preferred the Levites to assist the Priests in killing the other Sacrifices, which never before they were admitted to.

And therefore I would be satisfied, to what purpose *Josiah* should trouble himself, to conform to the patterns of *Moses*, *David*, *Solomon*, in these Circumstantials, if by prerogative Royal He might dispense with, alter, repeal in whole, or in part any of Gods positive institutions.

§ 3. Whatever irregularities there might be in this Passover of *Hezekiah*, (and to be sure there were some in so great and inveterate a degeneracy) that holy Prince humbly deprecates the just displeasure of God, and stands not sawcily to justify himself, that it was in his Commission to alter Circumstantials in worship. v. 18. They did eat the Passover otherwise then was written. And *Hezekiah* prayed for them, v. 19, 20. saying, Lord God pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, and the Lord hearkened to *Hezekiah*, and healed the People. Whence it's undeniable, 1. That if we would take the exact measure of the stress which God lays upon an Ordinance, we must have no regard to those idle coined distinctions invented in case of utmost extremity, as men in famine will live (poor souls) upon any thing, but to the word of institution. They did otherwise then was written. What *Moses* his writing was, they know; what *Dauids*, what *Solomons* writings were, whereby the Levites were warranted to Kill, or assist in killing the Passover, they also knew, yet somethings there were not warranted by any of these writings, for which there was no scriptum est: and [otherwise] in an Institution, is [contrary] to the Institution, and for these *Hezekiah* begs Pardon. 2. That though the People who had been long hardened under the degeneracy, made no bones of the matter, they might perhaps look upon all these as Circumstantials, upon which God laid little stress, (for in times of Corruption there are never wanting some ingenious Persons, who will justify any thing) yet *Hezekiah* a Prince of an apprehensive spirit, and tender conscience, knowing well, that not to keep close to what was written, in instituted Worship, might draw down a Curie, sooner then procure a blessing, he earnestly cries to God for

for the pardon of irregularities. He went as near the Archetypes of the institution as the iniquities of the times, and a general prevarication would admit, and for the rest he is importunate with God that his jealousy might not consume them. Wherein our *Enquirer* had he stood by would have sufficiently derided his superstitious folly and fear, that laid so great a stress, where God laid very little, not understanding the prerogative of his imperial Crown, in dispensing with these Circumstantials. 3. That this irregularity was so hainous in the eye of God, that some wrath was already broken out from the Lord upon the People, the *Plague was begun*. And it was high time for a zealous Prince to interpose, not to determine Circumstantials, but to Determine that wrath, which for these Neglected Circumstantials was kindled, which by prayer he attempts, the only Incense by which, in his politick capacity, he could stand between the living, and the dead.

And thus the Jews say: *Antea quia commederunt occisi sunt, sed Regis precibus clades cessavit*; They that first eat of the Passover in their uncleannesses, were cut off by the immediate hand of God, but by the interposition of Hezekiah's prayers the plague stayed. 4. And we may reasonably hence conclude, that this Pious Prince, who was so sensible of the peoples irregularity in one kind, would have been as apprehensive of the Levites deficiency in another, had their fact contravened the institution: And as little Reason to doubt, but that the jealousy of God had smothered and flamed out against the Levites, as well as the People, had they killed, as the other, at the Passover otherwise then was written. And therefore Grotius, who magnifies this as an illustrious instant of Royal Authority to relax a Divine Command in case of necessity, yet dares not affirm that the King did all this upon his own Head, (least whilest he advanced his power, he should draw his prudence into Question) but, "Consulto (ut credibile est) prius Synedrio: having first advised with the Sanedrin about the Legality of the fact:

When therefore he askt us this Question; since the Magistrates had once such a power, how came they to lose it? I confess I cannot tell. I believe they have as much power as ever they enjoyed; and this I am certain of, that never any received such a power from God, as would warrant him to alter any of Gods institutions, to set up a New Religion, a

New



new Office or Institution, without special direction from Divine prescription, or immediate Revelation.

(2.) We come to his second Argument, which is this: *the New Testament is frequent in asserting the power of Magistrates, and requires all to be subject to them, of what quality or condition soever, Rom. 13. 1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* Thus far he has no enemy, at least he ought to have none. The practice of the primitive Christians, which commented admirably upon that Text of the Apostle, and other clear places, has put all this out of dispute, who were most severe in their Obedience under the most severe persecutions. Thus *Tertullian* in *Apol. Cap. 30.* “*Nos pro salute Imperatorum Deum invocamus,—Precantes sumus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quæcunque hominis, & Cæsaris vota sunt.* We pray to God for the safety of our Emperors, that God would give them a long life, a peaceable Government, that he would preserve the Royal Family, that he would vouchsafe them a faithfull Council, a loyal People, a quiet World, valiant Armies, and whatsoever their own wishes can desire. Thus *Dionysius*, in his *Apology* for the Christians, in the Persecution under *Vernus*, “*Nos unum Deum colimus, & veneramur, omnium fabricatorem, huic etiam sine intermissione, pro eorum regno ut firmum & stabile maneat preces adhibemus.* We worship (says he) and adore only one God, the Creator of all things, and to him we pour out our prayers night and day, that the Government of our Emperors may abide firm and unshaken. They that would plead *Christianus sum*, I cannot conform, would as sincerely say, *Christianus sum*, I dare not resist: There is then no question but that we are all upon pain of eternal damnation bound to obey the Civil Magistrate, and all that are sent by him, in all civil things which are not demonstrably sinfull, according to the Municipal Laws, but the question will meet us again though we avoid it; how far their power extends in matters of Immediate Worship, and things directly within the verge of Conscience, where in possibly I can yield as far as another, though I would proceed upon better grounds than the *Enquirer* has laid down, which now I come to examin.

§ 1. *The New Testament* (says he) *no where excepts the case of Religion.* Answer, 1. *No where excepts it?* Ay, but where does the *New or Old* express and include it? I was in hopes, that according

to his promise, he would have proved, that the *Magistrate exceeds not his Commission in determining the things under debate*, and he puts us off with this, *they are not excepted out of his Commission*: he that acts by *Commission*, must have his powers authorized by his *Commission*. Suppose, a Prince should issue out a *Commission* to certain Delegates, to hear and determine all differences relating the Forreign, and they shall intermeddle with Affairs that are out of the Purview, will it be thought enough to say, these places are not excluded their *Commission*. 2. Nor do I except *the case of Religion* out of the *Magistrates Commission*, but only humbly enquire of the *Enquirer*, how far the *Commission* extends in *Religious matters*? To this he gives us an Answer, *I mean so far as Circumstantials, and those things which God himself hath not defined*. But this will either destroy all again, or not mend the matter one jot: for, 1. I no where find, that God has excepted *Substantials* more than *Circumstantials* out of his *Commission*: In what respect the one is included, the other is so; and in what respect the one is excluded, the other is so: that is, both are included, for his preservation, and both excluded, as to his alteration of, adding to, or subtracting from them. If a *Commission* be produced, that the *Magistrate* shall guide me in all acceptable, external, instituted Worship, excepting the *Substantials* thereof, I have enough; for *exceptio in non exceptis firmat regulam*. The exception of *Substantials* would more strongly include the *Circumstantials*. And therefore I am afraid he will not produce a *Commission* that excepts *Substantials*. Let it be *Substance* or *Circumstance*; let men invent what terms or name they please. If in the outward exercise of Religion Christians shall disturb the Peace, they shall know and find, that the *Magistrate* has a coercive power that will reach them all, and all their outward actions, for the assuring that Peace, wherewith God has intrusted him. To give Alms is an act, a *substantial act* of Religion; yet if any Pharisaical spirit shall sound his trumpet to draw a concourse of people after him, and thus turn the trumpet of Religion into a trumpet of Rebellion; if he shall make *Sacramentum pietatis, vinculum iniquitatis*. He, and his Act come within the *Magistrates Commission*; and yet it extends not to alter an Act of Religion, but to suppress a design of Faction and Sedition.

2. Such an Exception as he fancies in the *Magistrates Commission*, as it no where appears, so would it be purely nugatory,

tory, did it appear, unless we had withall some infallible *normes*, to discriminate the *Circumstantials* from the *Substantials*: otherwise, either he might encroach upon the *Substantials*, under the notion of *Circumstantials*, or a refractory People would be always crossing and thwarting his *determinations*, under pretence that the *Substantials* were invaded, when he was only modelling and ordering the *innocent Circumstantials*: And thus, as the Sea and Land are always eating into each others liberties, or, as in some Nations, where Prerogative and Propriety are not equally balanced, the one is beating up the others quarters perpetually; so would there be an unappeaseable war between these *Substantials* and *Circumstantials*, which like the Marches between two Kingdoms of no firm correspondence, would be ever subject to the longer and sharper sword: But Christ hath not left these Concerns at such a loose end.

§ 2. He argues thus: *If they have not power in such matters of Religion as we speak of, its manifest they have no Magistracy or Legislative power at all in Religion.* I will deal freely with our Enquirer, for ought I know to the contrary, they have this power, and far greater power in the matters of Religion whereof he speaks, for I do not yet understand what those matters of Religion are whereof he speaks: But to answer as well as I can conjecture at his intentions. 1. I know not what a legislative power in Religion means in the hands of any but the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture has told us, *Jam. 4. 12.* That there is one Law giver who is able to save or to destroy. He that can eternally save, upon obedience, or eternally damn upon disobedience, may securely challenge a legislative power over the Church. Its certain from hence, that Christ is the only Lawgiver to his Church, in some sense; and in what sense that should be, but that he alone can impose matters of immediate Worship upon the Conscience, I cannot tell. He that denies Christ to be the only Legislator at this day, may with equal reason deny him to be the only Judge in the great Day: And it's not worth the while, for a few Ceremonies to lose one of the Articles of our Creed: Hitherto a general Council has been thought to have the highest visible power on earth to make Laws for the Church, and yet the Church of England has determined, *Art. 21.* That they may err, and have sometimes erred, even in things pertaining to God. And therefore it will be our safest and wisest course to leave the legislative power in matters of Religion in the hands of Christ, where God entrusted it, and where we found

it, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

2. There may be a *magistratical power* about Religious matters, where there is *no legislative power*: the Magistrate may have an *executive power* to do all that God has *commanded him*, and see others do all that God has *commanded them*, and yet *no legislative power* to alter, or add to the Institutions of Christ: what a vast field has every *Supream Magistrate*, wherein he may place out all his Zeal, Power, and Authority, and yet never touch the *Philactery* or *fringe* of the garment of Christ, either by enlarging, or paring it away. His Power is very evident in the Moral Law, bottom'd upon eternal and immutable reasons, and to build it upon such dubious and precarious Hypotheses, or to overcharge it with unscriptural powers, is but secretly to undermine it, or crush it down with its own weight.

( 3. ) His third Argument is this: *Its generally acknowledged (and accordingly practised) that Fathers and Governors of Families have authority in matters of Religion within their own Families, at least so far as the case in hand.* Nay, pray forbear a little: That they have an Authority in matters of Religion, is indeed acknowledged, and I wish it were more practised; all I *hesitate at*, is, whether he has such a power *as far as the case in hand*: The case in hand is, or should be, whether the Magistrate has power to determine such *Externals of Religion*, as he (to blind the business) thought meet to call *Circumstantial*; and such a power as *Dissenters* acknowledge not, so they practise not: It were very hard if a Master of a Family should arrogate to himself such a power, as to enjoin his Wife, Children, Servants, Relations, Strangers, to have a Pupil of Salt laid upon their Tongues, in token that they shall not be ashamed to have their speech seasoned with savoury discourse, without submission to which Crotchet, they shall either not be admitted into the family, or if already admitted, cast out of doors, or however not permitted to hear a Chapter read, or joyn in Prayer all their days: This would have been a little more to the case, of which our Enquirers Instances come exceeding short.

*Who doubt (says he) but the Father, or Head of a Family may prescribe what Chapters shall be read, what Prayers used, what time shall be set apart for Devotion, what postures, whether kneeling, standing, or being uncovered? who shall officiate in his Family? with innumerable others of the like nature: and if they be but of the like nature, they will never do us any harm. Let's look 'em over however.*

1. What

1. *What Chapters may be read*: Why truly, if the Question be only *which of the two or more, of equal authority*, he may be as fit as another: but if the competition were between *two, the one out of Scripture, the other out of some legendary Fabler*, that has stuff a Farce with Romanticks, I question much his power to determin, for God has at least determined thus far, that in all our Worship of him, we speak and read nothing but the Truth; and he that teaches his Family, ought to teach from, or according to the Oracles of God.

2. *What Prayers used*. God will not accept a Female from him that has a Male in his flock: as the Prince will not accept *such a present*, much less will the great God, who gives what he receives, and therefore may justly expect the best. No master of a family has authority to offer Prayers to God *less good*, if God have furnish'd him *with better*.

3. *What times shall be set apart for Devotion*: The setting apart of common time for Family-Worship, is a *meer Circumstance*, which neither renders the Worship more or less acceptable to God as it is time. And it is disjunctively commanded by him, who has commanded masters of families to *continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*, Col. 4. 1, 2. If God has commanded *Worship*, he has also therewith commanded *some time*, wherein to Worship: a time must therefore necessarily be resolved on, but by his good favour this is not to the *case in hand*. And yet as large as the Masters power may be in this matter, he must have regard to the general Rules of the Gospel: that *all things be done for edification*, to advance the success of the Duty. He may neither determin upon a Revolution too infrequent, nor upon a continuance too short, to slubber and huddle over the Ordinance in formal haste; nor upon an *unseasonable hour*, when his over-worked, and over-watched Servants are ready to drop asleep, when tired Nature is ready to overmaster the Souls gracious propensities towards Gods Service. And where he seems to have *most power*, he has far short of an *Absolute power*.

4. *For postures, whether kneeling, standing, or being uncovered*. I never so much admired the difference between *prædicamental situs, & habitus*, as to move a quarrel, whether *being uncovered* was a posture or no? yet I think these things are not capable of an *universal, fixed, unalterable Law*. If one of these postures shall render any one in the Family *incapable of pursuing, and reaching the ends of an Ordinance*; That Parent shall sin against God, who

rigidly exacts the most plausible posture or gesture; and I suppose he has *no Commission from God to sin against him*: If standing shall so disease a weak child, that being in pain he cannot attend the present service; If kneeling, shall ordinarily expose another to drowziness; If *being uncover'd*, shall prejudice health, and endanger life; If any of these or any other, shall distract the mind, make the duty a Burden, wear-out the Body; Masters of Families must know, that their power is *for edification, and not destruction*; and God *will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*, whatsoever an imperious Master will have. He that shall teach that Magistrates may dispense with the *Circumstantial*s of Gods worship; will sure never be so hardy, as to teach, that Masters of Families, and Magistrates too, ought not to dispense with their own institutions.

5. *In what Habit*: No Master of a Family has power to enjoin any Religious Habits appropriated to divine service: In the general 'tis true, habit is necessary upon many accounts, for health, decency: But *Religious Habits* are not so, not put into the Character of Domestick Power, nor indeed capable of a Canon.

6. *Who shall Officiate in a Family?* The duty of Officiating in the Family, is primarily incumbent upon himself; I know no Reason he should claim the Authority, who waves the duty: If he will have the honour, let him discharge the work of a Master of a Family, nor may he Command his Child to pray that cannot pray, with that usefulness to the edification to the whole: If any person whose greater Abilities may manage the Service more to the glory of God be present, his charitable prudence will instruct him to procure such assistance as may best promote the spiritual concerns of those under his charge.

To shut up this point. The powers here ascribed to a Master of a Family are such as do *not reach the case in hand*: Determination of Chapters, Prayers, Times, Postures, Gestures, Persons, which were not before determined by the divine power, will not make up *one mystical Ceremony*; and the Magistrate may have all this power, and yet none such as will reach *the case in hand*; That power which will serve to make a *primitive directory*, will not serve to impose a *modern Liturgy*; All that can possibly be screwed out of these instances of *Paternal Authority* is no more than this, that he may Determine between

two or more *Circumstances*, one of which is *disjunctively necessary* to the performance of a *necessary duty*: but it will be hard when he comes to try it, to infer a power to impose Myſtical Ceremonies, which are no ways necessary to the performance of any duty, no not by Disjunction.

I presume I have ſaved my Bail, if I ſhould give no further answer, yet for his greater ſatisfaction I ſhall trouble the Reader with theſe few Conſiderables.

§ 1. That the Governour of a Family, being upon the place, and having all preſent *Circumſtances* within his proſpect, may more uſefully determine upon all determinable *Circumſtances*, than a Magiſtrate for a whole Nation, and the ſeveral Congregations therein, whoſe Accidents are ſo various that they cannot poſſibly come under any uniform Determination: ſuppoſe a ſtrict Law were made at *Paris*, that every particular Church in the Nation ſhould commence their publick ſervice on the Lords day preſiſely at nine a clock, it is Mathematically certain, that ſome would have done and got half through *their dinners*, before others would be half way in *their Devotions*; They in the furtheſt Eaſtern Parts would have come to their *Amen*, before thoſe on the *Calabrian Ocean* would be at their *Oremus*, becauſe of the diverſities of Meridians, and Longitudes, and yet all would be but nine a clock.

§ 2. That the conſequence from the Power of a *Maſter of a Family*, to the *Civil Magiſtrates power*, is not very clear: for the Maſter of a Family is ſuppoſed to have *Minors* in his Family, who cannot be ſafely truſted with the Determination of thoſe *Circumſtances*, which muſt neceſſarily be determined, but it would be a reproch to the Chriſtian Religion, that all the Biſhops, Paſtors, and Churches in a Nation could not find wit enough to determine, what time of the day were moſt expedient to Aſſemble in. The power of a Prince is far more Noble, then that of the Family Governour, and yet by Reaſon of the *incapacity*, and *unſitneſs of the matter*, the *bulkiſneſs of the Aggregate*; the leſſer power may poſſibly Determine upon ſome ſmall *Circumſtances* which the greater power is unſit to do: To be Captain of a *Man of war* is more honourable than to command a Skuller; and yet this latter will tack about more nimbly, then that cumbersome Argosie, becauſe the Veſſel is more Manageable.



§ 3. This *uniformity* which is so much driven at in all these arguments, as the great Reason of the Necessity of *universal Determination*, is a name much bandied in speculative discourses, rather than a thing practicable; if we may judge that *not feasible*, which never yet was attained. Let us look a little nearer home! And first we find no Punctual uniformity between the two Provinces: He that can sing Divine Service in the Province of *York*, may without new instruction be utterly to seek in the Psalmodie of *Canterbury*; look upon the same Province, and compare the *Parochial*, with the *Cathedral* service, and there's less uniformity still. He that can fadge pretty well at a Country-Church, is quite lost in the uncouth usages of the Minster: Look into the *Parochials*, and some have their Conformity, Superconformity, statute Ceremonies, and Canon Ceremonies, so that you would hardly judge them to be half-sisters: take a step nearer, and look in the same Parish-Church, uniformity is not to be found there; there, the Minister is not conformable to himself. At one prayer he *stands*, at another he *kneels*, at one part of the publick Service he is *all white*, and then that *colour is most decent*, by and by *all Black*, and then *that is most decent*; nor is there any uniformity between the Minister, and the people; He, at the *Delivery* of the consecrated Elements, *praying* in a posture of *standing*, and they in the *Act of Receiving*, who *pray not*, yet confined to *Geniculation*. Nor is there less discrepancy between the several *parts of worship*; for whereas the grand Plea for Ceremonies is a certain *Decency*, which they conciliate to the service, and their usefulness to stir up the dull minds of men, yet *only Baptism* is adorned with *the sign of the Cross*, and the rest left naked of so great an ornament, and yet the Apostles Rule is, let *all things* be done *decently*; and we have as much need to have our dull minds quickened in the other Sacraments, and all other parts of worship.

§ 4. Lastly, That power which belongs to the *supream Civil Magistrate*, as such belongs to *all and every supream Magistrate*; but this power of instituting, imposing Ceremonies belongs not to every *Supream Civil Magistrate* as such, that is, it belongs to none.

The Reason of the Major Proposition is taken from the Common Axiome. *A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*: The proof of the *minor* is this: That which belonged not to the *Supream Civil Magistrate* for three hundred years after Christs time, belongs not to all *Civil Magistrates*; but this power of instituting, and imposing

imposing Ceremonies belonged not to the Civil Magistrate for 300 years after Christs time, therefore it belonged not to all. To enervate which Argument it must either be denyed that the Roman Emperours during that Period were supreme Civil Magistrates, which St. Paul opposes, charging the Churches to obey them; or asserted that they had a power to determine of the Circumstantial of the Christian Religion, and prescribe what Ceremonies they saw in the Evangelical worship.

[ 2. ] We now come to his second Thesis. *If the Magistrate may Determine these Matters; then not onely Christian charity, and humility, but common Prudence requires us to presume of the wisdom and reasonableness of his determinations, and much more to obey them.*

I shall say little, but perhaps smile the more at the prettiness of the consequent. It's our duty to presume of the reasonableness, but much more to obey those Determinations; that is, it's much more our duty to obey, than to be Rational.

That we are to presume very highly of the wisdom of our Superiours acting within their proper Sphære, we readily admit: For when God calls them to a work, he will bestow competent wisdom for the discharge of it; but yet I am not to presume so unmeasurably of any ones wisdom, as to resign up my Faith and Conscience, with the disposal of Gods worship without more ado to it, If God had given him Authority to determine these matters, I should not have been concern'd to Question his wisdom: Gods command had superseded my little scruples, and though he had miscarried in his prudential Decision, I should have received the praise of subjection, but till such Authority do appear, I shall set down on this side such presumption, though somewhat beyond despair.

If the Reader has any pity left, he may do charitably to bestow a little of it upon me, that must be obliged to answer all the Sentences and Apothegms in Wits-commonwealth, and yet to this drudgery I shall patiently submit till I am quite tyred, and then Relinquish this Province.

( 1. ) *It's enough (says he) to warrant and require our obedience, that the thing is the Command of our Superiour, and not beyond the Sphære of his Authority.*

That Religion is within the Magistrates Sphære, I have freely owned, but not to all intents and purposes; not to pluck up what God has planted, not to plant what God has pluckt up. Substantials,

stantials, and Circumstantials are all within his Sphære, but not to do what he pleased withall.

As all Persons, with their Civil concerns are within the Magistrates Sphære, their Lives, Liberties, and Estates all come under his cognizance, and yet there are some great Lawyers, and Loyal Subjects, who think they are not within his Sphære to dispose of them at pleasure; so are all the concerns of Religion within his Sphære too, to preserve, not to destroy; to propagate, not to alter; to encourage, not to innovate in the worship of God: for All power is for Edification, not Destruction.

Every Christian has Religion within his Sphære, that is, he has a concern in it, but no concern over and above it; *Tota Religio*, but not *Totum Religionis*, as *Totus Homo*, yet not *Totum Hominis* are within the reach of Magistracy: He has a power to secure Religion; Religion is therefore within his Sphære; but he has none to make a new Religion, or a new part of Religion, that therefore is out of his Sphære, nor will it excuse me to God, his word, and my own conscience blindly to obey in every thing, some whereof may be out of his Sphære, because he has a power to command some things which are within his Sphære.

The true ancient Protestants of this Church with no less zeal than success defended the Princes power and Supremacy against all the claims of Rome, and yet never ascribed such a power to him as might shackle Conscience, & dispose of Religion at pleasure. I shall give the Reader a taste from the learned Bishop *Bilson*, who dedicates his book to Queen *Elizabeth*, and it came abroad *Cum Privilegio*. Dial. pag. 533, 534, 535, &c. The Discourse is between a Papist, and a Protestant.

Philander. *If the Queen establish any Religion, you are bound by your oath to obey it whatsoever it be.* Theophilus. We must not rebel, nor take Armes against the Prince (as you affirm you may) but with reverence and humility serve God before the Prince: Phil. *Then is not the Prince Supreme.* Theo. Why so? Phil. *Your selves are superiour, you will serve whom you list.* Theo. As though to serve God according to his will, where to serve whom we list, and not whom all Princes, and others ought to serve. Phil. *But you will be judges, when God is well served and when not:* Theo. If you can excuse us before God, when you mislead us, we will serve whom you appoint us: otherwise if every man shall answer for himself, good Reason he be Master of his own Conscience in that which toucheth him so near, and no man can excuse him for. Phil. *This is to*  
make

make every private man supream Judge of Religion, Theo. The poorest wretch that is may be supream governour of his own heart : Princes rule the publick and external actions of their Countries, but not the consciences of men. Phil. *Would you have such confusion suffered in the Church, that every man should follow what he list ?* Theo. I would not have such presumption and wickedness brought into the Church, that Christ, and his Word should be subjected to the wills, or voices of mortal men : For though the whole world should pronounce against him, or it, God will be true, and all men shall be lyars. Phil. *No more would we.* Theo. Why then restrain you Truth to the Assemblies, and Sentences of Popes, and Prælates, as though they must be gently entreated, and fairly offer'd by Christ, before he might attempt, or expect to recover his own. Phil. *We would have things done orderly.* Theo. Call you that Order, where Christ shall stand without doors, till your Clergy shall consent to bring him in ? Phil. *God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace.* Theo. It's no confusion, for one family, yea, for one man to serve God, though all the families, and men of the same Realm will not. *Joshua said to the people, If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, chuse you whom you will serve, but I, and my House will serve the Lord.* Elias was left alone, for any that he saw willing to serve God in Israel, and yet abated not his zeal : Micheas alone opposed himself against 400 Prophets, with what judicial Authority, can you tell ? *Amos* neither spared *Jeroboam* the King, nor *Amaziah* the Priest, and yet he was but a simple Herdsman, and not so much as the son of a Prophet. *John-Baptist* had no competent Jurisdiction over the Scribes, and Pharisees that sate in *Moses* his chair, and yet he condemned them for a generation of Vipers. The Councils, where *Peter*, *Stephen*, *Paul*, were convened, accused and punishr, lacked none of your Judicial formalities, and yet the Apostle stoutly both resisted, and condemned their deliberative and definitive sentences. Phil. *The Apostles Commission we know, but yours we know not.* Theo. You cannot be ignorant of ours, if you know theirs ; so long as we preach the same Doctrine that they did, we have the same Power and Authority, which they had ; keep your competent Jurisdctions, Judicial Cognitions, and legal Decisions to your self : The Son of God first founded, and still gathered his Church by the mouths of his Preachers, not by the summons of Consistories : he that is sent to preach, may not hold

hold his tongue, and tarry, till *my Lord the Pope, and his Mitred Fathers* can attend to meet, and list to consent to the ruine (as they think) of their dignities and liberties. Phil. *Despise you Councils?* Theo. By no means; so long as they be Councils, that is, sober, and free Conferences of godly and learned Teachers; but if they wax wanton against Christ, and will not have the truth received, untill they have consented, we reject them as conspiracies of the wicked, which no Christian ought to reverence---But will you suffer God to make Laws for his Church? Phil. *What else?* Theo. And may not every private man embrace those Laws which God hath made, who-soever say nay? Phil. *He must.* Theo. What if some Bishops will not agree they shall? must the Prince, and People cease to serve God, till the Clergy be better minded. Phil. *In matters of Faith the Prince and Lay-lords have no voices.* Theo. in making Laws they had. Phil. *True! but laws for Religion they might not prescribe.* Theo. No more might Bishops! It's only Gods Office to appoint how he will be served. Phil. *Gods Will must be learned at the mouths of the Bishops.* Theo. They much teach, leaving always the liberty to the Prince, and People, to examin their Doctrine, and avoid their error, and if they Teach not Truth, the Prince and People may expel them.

I shall now leave it to the determination of the impartial and unprejudiced Reader, whether he that was then the *Protestant*, would not now be the *Fanatick*; and whether he that makes our *Enquirers* Objections, would not have passed for a *Catholic* of the Roman Edition in those days?

(2.) *Humility* (says he) requiring that we think meanly and modestly of our own Reasons, Charity that we judge favourably of anothers, and Prudence that we think best of the Magistrates, all these together make it our duty not onely to obey, but to do it with all chearfulness imaginable. Answ. 1. No humility teaches me in the matters of eternal Salvation, to put out my own eyes to see with anothers spectacles: my neighbours eyes may be clearer and stronger than mine, yet mine are mine own; he that has better eyes than I, has this happiness, that he may direct himself better, but yet he would direct me worse, without the use of my own: a Christians own Reason, informed from Gods Word, is the immediate guide of his steps in all acceptable obedience to, and walking with God. *Blind obedience* in this case is no obedience. *Humility* teaches me to think my self a man, and therefore may err; but

but not a brute, which cannot but err : It neither teaches me to revere any Creature as my God, nor to despise my own intellectuals, as if I were a beast. 2. Though charity command me to judge favourably of anothers spiritual estate for the present, his eternal state for the future, yet it commands me not to neglect making provision for my own ; it commands me to love another as my self, and therefore not above my self ; I cannot expect another should be true, if I prove false to my own soul. Its a blind charity, and only fit for the Hospital, that would make me of every mans Religion, of whom it teaches me to judge favourably, for, at this rate I must be of twenty Religions, and perhaps, one half of them together by the ears with the other half : Charity will heal the evil eye, and make it good, but not put it out. 3. Charity teaches me to think best of the Magistrates Reason in common Kingdoms, but better of Scripture Reason in the territories of Conscience. And prudence will dictate to me, that God, who has placed him in his Political Orb, will provide an intelligence to move that Sphære regularly, for, *Quæ supra nos, nihil ad nos*, but no prudence will teach me to espouse a Religion because 'tis his, but because it approves it self to the Test, and Touch-stone of all Religion, the Word of God.

I could learn better Divinity from an honest Heathen than this stuff ; Pliny hath given us this Rule, *Cantissimi cujusque præceptum, quod dubitas ne feceris*. And Tully, *Quocirca bene præcipiunt qui vetant quicquam agere, quod dubites æquum sit an iniquum* : They preach true Doctrine who warn you not to do any thing, whereof you doubt whether it be good or evil. And though such a prudence as he has described, may contingently do me no great hurt at home, yet it will make me a Papist in Italy, a Mussulman at the Port, a Heathen in China, or rather every where just nothing.

( 3. ) Its a common mistake to think Charity, and Compassion, only due from Governours to their Inferiours in the frame and compofure of their Laws, for its due also from Inferiours towards them, and that they make a fair and candid construction of their injunctions. The duty is reciprocal without doubt, but with great difference we pitty and pray for our Superiours under their burthens of government, and expect onely pitty from them under our loads of subjection ; and though we account subjection no servile yoke, yet 'tis a yoke ; as Bernard in another case, *Duice quidem conjugium est jugum, sed tamen jugum* ; and yet a compassionate tenderness towards inferiours in those things wherein God

has

has tyed up Conscience, is an abundant recompence for all that subjection: we would willingly part with all that is *properly our own*, to secure that which is *properly Gods*; and though Magistrates are strictly *above our pitty and compassion*, yet we hope we are not *below theirs*; If they call for our pitty in any case, 'tis to see them tormented with the importunate solicitations of one part of their subjects to destroy the other: As it must needs be an unspeakable affliction to a Father to be harassed by some of his Children to abnegate and disinherit the rest. As 'tis a great injury to the Sun to endeavour to monopolizé his Beams, to the Fountain, to impropriate its streams, when the one would shine indifferently, the other flow impartially towards all; so is it a great trouble to a generous Prince to have his Favours intercepted, his Royal Grace under sequestration, that he cannot equally influence *the whole Body*, of which *the Grace of God* has made him *Head*.

Nor do we dare to judge *our Superiours*, but *our selves*; not their *intentions*, but our own *actions*; which if we may not do, better it were to be divested of all these cumbersome Reasons of ours, which therefore serve to *increase our misery*, because they teach us what it is to be happy.

To make a candid interpretation of their Actions, we own our duty, and as we suppose they steer by the light of their own judgments, so we hope they will indulge us to act by ours; if we mistake, we wrong our selves, if our mistakes should wrong them, we submit to correction: if they mistake, we must wait under the inconveniences of the effects of that mistake, till the Father of Lights shall inspire other Counsels, only let us remember, that it is the Princes Glory to be *Rex hominum, non asinorum, nec Angelorum*.

(4.) The Scripture (says he) calls the Magistrates Masters of restraint, *Judg. 18. 17*. And its amongst their most glorious Titles, the least of which (if any man be called little) we revere; and it will be their immortal honour to *restrain wicked men from doing evil*, if they cannot restrain them from *being evil*: It was a flower in *Jobs Coronet, Ch. 29. 17*. 2. That he brake the jaws of the wicked, and pluckt the spoil out of his teeth; Masters of restraint they are, not to restrain Religion, but Irreligion, and the insatiable thirst of those which nothing will quench but the blood of their Brethren, or that which was earned with the sweat of their faces.

(5.) Not



(5.) Nor would it be a foolish charity, or blind obedience to permit our selves to the conduct of our Superiors in those little things we speak of: To permit and resign up our selves to the conduct of others in Religious matters absolutely, is *blind obedience*, whether a sober Enquirer will call them little or no? Though the things may be small, the *blindness* of our obedience may be as great, as if the things were greater; *blindness* consists not in the object, but in the faculty; but, 1. The things we discourse of, (if we discourse *ad idem*) are not little, but the *great things* of the Gospel; Great I say, if we consider the greatness and danger of those *Principles* which they proceed upon, or the greatness and dangerousness of those *consequences* which they draw along with them; a little spark may kindle, if neglected, a great flame; They suppose either that Christ had not all power committed to him in heaven, and in earth, or that he has given it away by some dormant warrant, and clandestine commission, or that he never exercised his power to settle the Regimen of his Church, or that his Edicts may be rescinded, and cassated by humane will. And they draw along with them a train of fatal Consequences, as that 'tis possible the condition of Christs Church may be irremediably more servile than ever was that of the Jewish, if Religion should fall into bad mens hands. But no sin is little to him, that knows what blood it cost to expiate it, what sorrow it costs the true penitent to mourn for it, and what pains it cost the true Christian to resist it. 2. If the things be so little in the judgment of imposers, we hope we shall taste of their compassion in indulging such little things; it shall be no little praise we should return to the great God, no little returns of duty and exemplary obedience we should make to his Vicegerent, that should permit us the indifferent use of indifferent things, and suppose them so, yet the *faith of indifferent things is no indifferent thing*: But I observe, that when our Enquirer would have Dissenters punished for the neglect of these things, then they are not little! then they become the greatest, weightiest, most important things in the world; then Churches, Government, Religion cannot subsist without them, as accidents cannot subsist without their substances, so neither substances exist without their accidents, but when he comes to drole us into compliance, then they are little trifles, minutes, punctilioes, of Religion. 3. If to resign up our selves in matters of immediate Worship without a warrant from

from God, to any but God, be not *blind obedience*; 'tis because we are blind, and cannot see what blind obedience is: We freely commit our selves to the Political conduct in all things temporal; a Ministerial conduct we own in our Pastors and Teachers; a Sovereign conduct we would gladly reserve for Christ. We would willingly go any whither but to Hell, do any thing but *sin*, lose any thing but *the peace of our Consciences*, and part with any thing, but what is *none of ours to dispose of*, rather than seem to tergiverfate from the commands of our Governors.

And as we confess *the Magistrate stands upon higher grounds than we*; so we *must*, and without displeasing our Superiors *may say*, that Christ stands upon *higher ground than he*; and when we shall come to stand before his Tribunal, there to receive according to our works, we shall all stand upon even ground, as to any difference that external advantages in this present world shall then make.

( 6. ) *We have reason to persuade our selves that we may as easily lie under prejudices, as they; and that we may be as much transported with considerations of ease and liberty, as they may probably be suspected to be with ambition.* Answ. It's the duty of all to watch against those temptations, to which we lie most open from without; and to watch over those corruptions, to which we are most obnoxious from within; we dare not think it *probable*, that our *Magistrates are transported with ambition*; and we profess that we are not transported with any base lust, or pitifull considerations to suspend active Obedience, till we discover such transport by its proper fruits. But if we must still be represented by our sometimes Brethren, but now Persecutors, as misguided by prejudices, we are sorry for it, but cannot help it; and must place these secret aspersions in the number of those burthens, which by frequent use grow familiar, and less pinching, and such, as seeing they are not to be avoided, wisdom dictates they ought to be contemned. And yet we shall pray, that our Magistrates, like the highest Boughs of the goodliest trees being most fruitfull, may bow down themselves with abundance of precious fruits, and drop some of it into the laps of their despised, but loyal subjects.

( 7. ) *There are no less different capacities of mind, than constitutions of body, and as great difference in mens outward circumstances, as in either of the former*: The Magistrate will certainly thence judge, that there ought to be as great a diversity and latitude in his

his impositions: He that has a larger swallow, let him have a larger cann: Let the best stomach have the largest Trencher: and since one stomach will bear what would oppress another, why should one mans Conscience be compelled to digest what anothers can easily put over: Either we must *practise* whilst we *think* not the same things, which is a sordid piece of *unworthy Hypocrisie*, and no credit to uniformity to congregate such Heterogenous materials; or else tormented, because our Constitutions, Capacities, Consciences, Circumstances are not of one size, which is not our fault, for we had not the mingling of our temperatures, nor the putting together of our frames; or else (which we hope they who are wiser then us all will judge most eligible) that every one retaining his different sentiments which impede not Christianity, or disturb the Peace, may be indulged in a practise peaceably managed, suitable to those innocent variations. And since our *Enquirer* has quoted an old story, I shall onely repeat his words, and leave the Reader to his own thoughts for the application: *Those that would have the Laws fitted to their humour, without respect to other men, do but imitate the Barbarous Custom of the Infamous Procrustes, who is said to have either Rackt all those Persons that fell into his hands, and stretch'd them out to his own size, if they were too short; or cut them off to his own proportions, if they were too long.* And really if any of the Dissenters be of that Imperious and Tyrannical temper, I know not why they should expect that Mercy they will not show, or institute themselves in those priviledges, out of which they would eject all others.

I have heard that the Famous B. *Andrews*, Disputing with the great Cardinal *Peronne* about these Matters, urged very finartly, *That Man ought not to add to Gods word, lest he lose his part in the Book of life.* The Politick Cardinal asks, *Why then do you retain the Cross in Baptism?* The Bishop Answered: *Because Authority enjoyns it.* And for the same Reason (replied the Cardinal) *we retain all the rest of the Ceremonies: what Rejoynder the Bishop made, I do not remember.*

It's the great duty, and will be the unspeakable comfort of all in Authority to preserve the whole Worship of Christ pure and undefiled, and all the Worshippers of Christ in peace and security, and when they have done this, they seem to me to have discharged their Commission, and may sue out their *Quietus est*, and easily receive, *That huge, Well done good and faithfull Servant, Thou hast been faithful in a few things,*

things, I will make the Ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. As for them who fear a Prince will have nothing to do, since *Necessaries* are already determined, *unlawfull things prohibited*, if he may not *Determine the rest*: They are worse scared than hurt, God has cut him out work enough in his precept, and many times (for the sins of a people) cuts them out harder work by his Providence, and he is little beholden to those *Over officious Monitors*, who prompt him to grasp more employment, whilst any lyes upon his hands. The Christian Religion was perfect and absolute at all points, as it came out of Christ's hands, and if we make it *no worse* when 'tis in ours, he will never complain, though we never make it better.

*Alcibiades* brings in the *Athenians* Complaining to the Oracle of *Jupiter Ammon*, that *their Enemies the Lacedemonians prevailed against them*; and yet (say they) *we offer many and costly Sacrifices*, when they present the Gods with *few, cheap, or none*. The Oracle Answers (and it might have become a better mouth) That the *εὐνομία*, *The plain simple Service of the Lacedemonians was more acceptable to the Gods*, then all the *splendid, pompous will-worship of the Athenians*.

As the great God is exceedingly jealous in this particular, so has he not left himself without a witness in the Consciences of those who had no other Notices of Gods Nature but what came in by the light of Nature, or some refracted beams of Revelation conveyed to them by Tradition. The *Pythagoreans* taught this Doctrine, that the Gods were to be worshipt, *α μὲν εὐνομίαις*, according to their own good pleasure: And it was one of the *Platonical Dictates*, That all Divine worship must be *θεομετρίαις*, measured by the Acceptation and appointment of God.

The Conference which *Numa Pompilius*, the great Roman Ritualist had, or pretended to have with the Goddesses *Ageria*, instructs us, that he confided little in his Regal power, without a Divine *Placat* to conciliate a due Reverence to those Ceremonies, which having in them no Moral goodness, depended wholly upon a positive institution, and that no Artifice will ever preserve a Religious Rite sacred and intemperate which is not stamped with a *jus Divinum*.

If indeed an Old fragment, a trivial Sentence, or shred out of an Heathen Author, were to be the Canon of our Faith, or the Rubrick of our worship, I could easily comply with this

Enquirer,

Enquirer, who brings ( and 'tis as fair a proof as any he brings ) a saying of *Æmilius Paulus* to his Souldiers, *Vos Gladios acuite ! Whet you your Swords, and be ready to execute what shall be Commanded you, but leave the Management of Affairs to your General.* If Christians do really owe that Subjection in Religious matters to Superiours, which private Souldiers owe *their General* in the Field, this Controversie is at an end, and with it all instituted Religion in the World, that deserves that excellent Name. It may easily be applied : Provide your *knees to bow, and backs to bear, mouths to say what shall be put into them, Hands to subscribe what shall be tendered to you, and leave the Truth of Principles, the Composure of a Worship, the guidance of Conscience to wiser Heads.* And he might have quoted us *Cæsars Commentaries* to as much purpose, where that great Commander, upon the reluctancy of his Souldiers to engage, sharply chides them, *Quod aut quam in partem, aut quo Consilio ducerentur, sibi quærendum aut cogitandum putarent : Who durst once surmise, or enquire, either whether, or upon what design they are drawn out.* And thus at last we shall be sped both of a *Director* for worship, and a *Canon of Church-Government*; and may with the *Traditores* of old deliver up our Bibles for wast paper : unless we had rather imitate the famous *Legio fulminatrix*, who knew how to whet their Swords against the Common Enemy at the Command of the Emperour, and yet to refuse a Religious Ceremony, vouched by no other than *Humane Authority.*

His fine Sentence out of *Cato* is also hugely wide in this case *Nulla lex satis omnibus commoda, id modo quæritur, si majori Parti, & in summum prodest.* No Law sits equally easie upon all mens shoulders, the onely consideration is, whether it suit with the Generality, and be useful in the main. 'Tis very true, Law-matters cannot apportion out their Civil Constitutions to an Ounce or a Drachm : but one scruple of Conscience weighs heavier then a pound of temporal Inconveniencies. If it be true, that because in the laying of an Impost, Custom, or Excise, the Minor part of the Civil Suffragans must yield to the Major, that therefore a Religion too must be chosen by the Poll, and God compelled to accept of that, or Nothing, which the Majority of Votes shall allot him, Religion shall be sure in most parts of the World to be out-voted by Atheism ; Truth run down by Error, Holiness prescribed by Impiety : As *Socrates* in his time was a Fanatick, *Athenasius* in his an Heretick, and *Christ* himself amongst the high-trotting Scribes and Pharisees a Deceiver : with such ma-

ximes as these has *Christianity* been prostituted to will and pleasure: *Regi aut civitati Imperium habenti nihil injustum quod utile: To a Prince or Common wealth vested with Sovereign Power, nothing can be unjust, that is profitable. In summa fortuna, id æquius, quod validius; In the highest estate, that is ever most just, that has obtained the upper hand. And the Enquirer has approved himself a Person qualified with Carneades his Excellencies, Qui pro falso, non minus quam pro vero, vires eloquentiæ potest intendere; One that for time of need can strain his Wit, to set a fair gloss upon a foul matter, and with as little trouble can expose a Truth, as impose an Error.*

## C H A P. VII.

Wherein Christian Liberty consists? The *Enquirers* Reasonings examined, and Dissenters vindicated from that Insinuation, that they pretend by their Christian Charter to be discharged from Obedience to Laws.

**I**T is a Privilege that has too much of Absolute Sovereignty in it for the *Opponent*, to impose what state of the Question he pleases upon the *Respondent*: The *Enquirer* has therefore got the poor Non-conformists upon a sure lock, If he can oblige them to maintain, That *Christian liberty* discharges them from Obedience to Laws.

There are indeed some Laws from whose Obligation if Christian Liberty cannot discharge us, it can do very little: And there are other Laws, from which if Christian Liberty should pretend to give a discharge, it would assume too much.

To Discharge from Obedience, is too Ambiguous a Term to be put into this Question. For, 1. Christian Liberty in some cases does not discharge us from Obedience, but prevents the Obligation: It does not dissolve the Bond, but prevents the Binding. 2. Christian Liberty may discharge from a Necessity of Obedience (in some cases) which is the formal Reason of Subjection to a Law, and yet not discharge from the Lawfulness of doing that which is the Material part of the Law: If a Law be made the Matter whereof is things purely indifferent in their Natures, and

and these things appropriated to the immediate Service of God; Christian liberty will not make it *unlawfull to do those things*, but it will still maintain its ground, that its *lawfull not to do them*.

The Province of this Liberty whereof we now treat, lies between those things which are *necessary, and sinfull*; as it is frequently pleaded about the Magistrates power, since things forbidden cannot lawfully be done, nor things commanded, lawfully omitted, (in their proper seasons) the Magistrate must either have a power in these *middle concerns*, or he can have no legislative power at all: The same or some such thing I would affirm here, whatever is *sinfull* admits of *no release*, whatever is a *duty* admits of *no indulgence*; and therefore *Christian liberty* must have its appartment in these *adiaphorous things*, or be quite shut out of doors

Now, seeing the Magistrates power lies only in those things *ἐν μέσῳ καὶ ἀδιάφορα*, such as stand in a posture of Neutrality, and side in neither, with good nor evil; and seeing also that Christian Liberty has for its sphere indifferent things, these two powers must needs strike fire, and their interests perpetually clash, unless some expedient may be found out to reconcile their seeming enterfeering motions.

Indifferent things may fall under a two-fold Consideration, either as they are applied to, or used in ordinary affairs of humane life; or as they are appropriated to Divine Worship, and preferred to serve in Religious Affairs: In the former respect they come unquestionably under the Magistrates cognizance, which our Blessed Saviour has put beyond the dye of controversie by his exemplary practice, *Mat. 17. 24*. Where though he might have pleaded a peculiar privilege, yet he rather chose to wave it, and recommend to us a singular pattern of due subjection; in this case then Christian Liberty ought not to interpose. In the other consideration Christian Liberty puts in a claim, and this also our Saviour has made indisputable by his Example, who though he would freely submit to a Tax of twenty pence, would not yield to their Ceremony of *washing hands*, though it was not worth a farthing, when Superstition had lifted it up above its place.

And yet as sacred things in their external exercise may come under the inspection of the Civil Powers, in order to the securing of publick Peace, which is directly intrusted with him by the God of Order and Peace; so many things in their



own nature *secular*, come under the jurisdiction of *Christian Liberty*, when they shall be advanced above their pedigree, and made either *parts of Worship*, or *conditions* to the enjoyment of Communion therein.

There are two sorts of persons, who as they are enemies to all Truth, so they are but back-friends to *Christian Liberty*; some there are who have made it such an Idol, that they have sacrificed things sacred and civil to its Deity; and given it such a boundless dominion, as if like Quicksilver, it were neither to be contained, *suis aut alienis terminis*. Against these I shall need to say the less, because every one has a stone to throw at, a cudgel to bestow upon them: Others there are who have adorned it with a *Hogan Mogan* title, and yet have cut a-funder the sinews of its authority, and with these it's a *meer name*, which either with *Echo* evaporates into air, or with *Narcissus* dissolves into water.

But that there is such a Charter our *Enquirer* grants: I suppose he has found it amongst *some ancient Records*, if it be not forfeited for want of *Renewing*, yet that it has some considerable immunities and privileges, he thus demonstrates.

1. From the gratitude we owe to him that purchased it; and therefore we may conclude, that Christians stand seized of a good and indefeazable estate therein, for it could hardly claim so much gratitude to be *Tenants at the will of man*.

2. From the price it cost him; which was no less than the precious blood of a Redeemer; and surely that which could not be purchased with silver and gold, should never be sold for the highest offer of things corruptible.

3. From that strict injunction, *Gal. 5. 1. To stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage*: from whence the Apostle instructs us,

1. That no force can wrest this sacred privilege out of our hands without our own consent; 'tis our sin if our Charter be lost. 2. That we are prohibited to submit our necks to any *Religious yoke*, as well as that from whence the Disciples were exempted; for as good have the back broken with an old burthen, as with a new one.

This Christian Liberty being so considerable in the purchase, must be also of great usefulness in the practice; which that we may the better understand and improve, I shall modestly give the Reader my thoughts in the ensuing Propositions.

(1.) Chri-

(1.) Christian Liberty consists not in a *meer liberty of Judgment*, because ; 1. This had been too mean a purchase for the *Bloud of Christ*, to procure us that which never was, never could be denied to any Creature that had a judgment. For, 2. *The Jews*, when their *most servile burthens*, had ever a liberty to judge the things imposed, to be *indifferent in their own nature*, antecedent to the positive Law of God. 3. Such a liberty the poor bird in the cage may celebrate, and fancy her self a citizen of the woods, when she's confined within the grates of her little cloyster ; such a one the prisoner may flatter himself with : and it reminds me what I observed th' other day passing in the streets, this gilded Inscription invited my eye, *Pray remember the poor Freemen, that are Prisoners in Ludgate* : Poor Freemen indeed (thought I) who have only the freedom to tell how they have served an Apprentiship with a Master, and now must serve a double, perhaps a perpetual one, with the Goal-er. 4. Nay, this would increase the bondage, to be always sharpening upon our liberty *in actu primo*, and yet never taste the sweet *in actu secundo*. 5. This would render the Christian Church in a worse plight than that of the *Jews*, who though they bore *more load* than we at home, who breath in a freer air, yet had this countervailing advantage, that God himself was the *Imposer* ; It is no such bargain to exchange a *Divine* for a *Humane yoke*, though somewhat lighter ; and if it be so, no thanks to those officious Gentlemen, who would gratifie Magistrates with a power over all *indifferent things*, and therefore 'tis but contingently that ours is not much more insupportable.

(2.) *Christian Liberty* consists in something *practical*, that which tends to, and chiefly lies in the using, *Gal. 5. 13.* *We have been called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh* : where the caution that we do not *misuse* it, strongly implies that it must be *used*. And if it lay only in a freedom of judgment, the caution had run, *use it not at all* ; all external use had been an abuse of it.

(3.) This liberty must hold *in utramque partem*, that we may *act or not act*, or determin *this or that way*, or it can be no liberty ; and this will be granted by all those, who deny the will to be free, unless it have a powerfull freedom towards both the *Terms* ; but as the self-determination of the will to one side prejudices not its liberty ; so the determination of our *Christian liberty* (by our choice, guided by prudence and reason) is

no extinguishment of its radical freedom. And as external compulsion, and foreign force put upon the will, would be a violation of its liberty, so all force put upon this *Christian liberty*, is an annihilation of it.

(4.) He that has *enlarged* me in this great privilege, has also commanded me to *restrain my self in the exercise of it*: and that, (1.) By *prudence*, when the use of an indifferent thing would prejudice my neighbours *Spiritual good*, my own *Salvation*, or the *Glory of God*: in these cases I must not plead my *Christian liberty* to act, but *exercise my Christian liberty to forbear* what would oppose those commanding ends of all Religion. *Qui faciunt quicquid licet, hac cito delabuntur ut faciant quod non licet*; He that will always do all he may, shall easily slide into the doing of what he may not. The same thing may be usefully done at another: *1 Cor. 6. 12. All things are lawfull for me, but all things are not expedient. And, Omne quod non expedit, in quantum non expedit, non licet*; Whatever may not be done with expediency, cannot be done lawfully. 2. God has commanded me to *restrain my self in the exercise of my Christian Liberty by charity* to my weak Brother: To lay a stumbling-block in the way of the weak, or blind, is a gross abuse of my *Christian liberty*; because no use of an indifferent thing ought to weigh against my Neighbours *Spiritual welfare*; and it argues a very light esteem of a Soul, when I am too proud to abridge my self in a trifle, rather than hazard his seduction into sin, & exposing to the wrath of God; this Rule the Apostle was under, *1 Cor. 10. 23. All things are lawfull for me, but all things edifie not*; and when they edifie not, Charity commands me to forbear them, in compassion to my Brothers Soul.

(5.) Though *Christian liberty* may in some cases be *restrained*, yet can it not in any lawfully be *resigned*: He that has commanded me to moderate it by the rules of *prudence and charity*, has yet commanded me to *stand fast in it*: He that *resigns his Liberty in one case*, by consequence gives it away in all; for though he has not actually resign'd it in every case, yet has he virtually betray'd it, by yielding in one, for there is the same reason of all the rest; as an owner may forgo the use, and yet reserve the right, which right will reduce the use too in season; so may a Christian wave his Liberty in the use, still preserving his right, that when opportunity shall invite, the use may attend and wait upon the right.

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The main violation of *Christian liberty* lies in a fixed, stated, perpetual compulsion to do what God has permitted me to omit, or in a like fixed, stated prohibition to do what God has made lawfull: for indeed this is that which mainly distinguishes between the restraint, and the infringement of this liberty; in the restraint and moderation of my Liberty by prudence, charity, or whatever other methods God has commanded, though I suspend my act for a time, yet when those circumstances which render'd such suspension a duty, go off from their places, I reassume the free exercise of my Liberty: the Stream for a while damm'd up, finds its old free Channel, and slides along in its wonted course; but if a Law be made, that I shall never act what I might lawfully do; or that I shall always act, or always in such a revolution, and at such stated periods, it's then an apparent encroachment upon my Liberty: This the Apostle notably teaches, 1 Cor. 6. 12. *All things are lawfull for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any: οὐκ ἐξουσιάζω τοῖς ἑσθῆσι*. To be brought under the power of a thing indifferent, or under the power of any person in a thing indifferent, is that great violation of this Charter. For, 1. Such resignation of my self to be restrained fixedly and statedly, is to subscribe, engage, and make an implicit vow and oath against all opportunities of using my Liberty for the Spiritual good of another, which Providence may offer me. Gods Providence by mustering together all due circumstances, is the great Director when, and where to use, and employ my *Christian liberty*: If then such concurring circumstances should command my forbearance of an act, to prevent the sin of my brother; if now I have suffered my self to be determined the other way, that I will constantly act, and never forbear; I have tyed my hands behind me from plucking him out of the snare of sin, and perhaps the pit of hell. And this is an evil, the utmost reach of whose mischiefousness I cannot possibly foresee; for God may possibly place me in such a juncture of circumstances, that I might reasonably hope, might win Souls to Christ, and I have manacled my hands, and cannot act, or hung a padlock on my own mouth, and cannot speak; or an advantage may be put into my hands to prevent the sinful scandal of another by my forbearance, and I am not *mei juris*, but must act. 2. By such predetermination of my self in things indifferent, in submission to any man, I do as much as in me lies alter the nature of indifferent things. For things sinful can

never

never be done ; Duties must *always* be performed in due time and place, and indifferent things should be *indifferently* used, as present circumstances invite *prudence and charity* to determin ; but when once they are predetermined, I can no more do an *indifferent thing*, than if it had been *sinfull* ; or no more omit an *indifferent act*, than if it had been *necessary*. 3. By such a fixed predetermination of my liberty, I ascribe more to man in his *positive precepts*, than to God in his *affirmative moral precepts* ; for the acts of such Commands may be suspended *pro hic, & nunc*, when they obstruct some great good, but in this case I must act uniformly, without respect to circumstances, let thousands be offended, stumbled, wounded in conscience, and prejudiced against Religion. And in short, by such resignation of my Liberty in its exercise, I have reduced my self to that imaginary liberty of Opinion, that dreaming freedom which the Lollards enjoyed in their Tower, and the poor Protestants in Bonners Cole-hole.

(7.) When Christian Charity commands me to forbear the use of the thing, which otherwise is within the Charter of Christian Liberty to use ; and at the same time the Christian Magistrate shall command me to practice that very thing by a fixed Law ; I humbly conceive, that Christian charity ought to restrain my liberty not to act, rather than the commands of the Magistrate inforce me to act. 1. Because the restraint which charity puts upon me, will soon determin and expire, but the Command of Magistrate is perpetual. 2. The restraint which charity puts upon me is internal, and so agreeable to, and consistent with the greatest freedom and liberty, but the restraint, put upon me by the Magistrate, is external and compulsory, which comports not with my inward Liberty : for if he deals merely by his will and authority, that suits not with my reason, and therefore has in it the nature of force ; but if the Magistrate should deal by Argument, then when a stronger appears to act according to his precept than that drawn from the good of my Neighbour by Charity, Christian Liberty may be free, and yet obey, provided always that that Argument be taken from the nature of the thing commanded, and not from the naked commands. 3. The weak Christian for whose sake Charity commands me to forbear acting, is one that cannot prevent his own weakness, his stumbling scruples, and aptness to be wounded ; but he that commands me to act, may prevent, recal, or suspend his own Edict in that which in its own nature is indifferent. And God has commanded me not

not to offend my weak Brother by the use of indifferent things, but he has no where commanded the *Magistrate* to impose indifferent things, which become not some way or other necessary. 4. It seems a most horrid thing to interpret Scriptures at this rate; that I should be commanded to *walk charitably*, till I am commanded to *walk uncharitably*; and forbidden to *destroy him for whom Christ died*, by my indifferent things, till I am enjoined to *destroy him*. Not to wound *weak Consciences*, till I am commanded to *wound them*. Thus shall moral precepts be avoyded by human positive Laws, which cannot be superseded by the *Divine positive Laws*. And if one may be thus enervated, the whole Decalogue had no firm station: And thou shalt not make to thy self a graven image, may be eluded by this, till we are commanded by *Authority*, and I am somewhat confident the foundation laid by the *Enquirer*, will bear that superstructure.

It is therefore a most opprobrious, and invidious charge with which he begins this Discourse. *All that we may have hitherto discoursed about the power of the Magistrate, some think may be avoided by pleading the Magna Charta of Christian Liberty*, for though it may be pleaded against some power that may possibly be assumed, yet against none, wherewith he stands endowed by the Law of Nature or Scripture; nor indeed against any useful power for the attaining the great ends of Government, publick Peace, and Tranquillity.

The Church of England in her avowed Doctrine asserts, that *Christ has ordained in his Church two Sacraments, generally necessary to Salvation*; now we conceive, that having a right as *Christians*, to all the Ordinances of Christ, necessary to Salvation; Christian Liberty may plead the enjoyment of all those Ordinances, upon those naked Terms Christ has offer'd them to Mankind. This is our *Magna Charta*; and if any shall encumber that Communion with new clogs, provisions, restrictions and limitations, we plead our *petition of Right*, which if it be denied us, our *Christian liberty* is so far violated.

Nor do we deny the Magistrate a power about our *Christian liberty*; If any shall turn this liberty into licentiousness, he may restrain them: nay, he may restrain the Liberty it self, where God has not preengaged us to restrain it; and he will eminently employ his power for Christ, when he exerts it, to assert and vindicate to all his loyal Subjects the free use of that great Charter;

*Charter*; and if encroaching violence shall make a forcibly entry upon that privilege, whereof we are in quiet and peaceable possession; we shall complain of the force to him, who will remove it, and reinvest us in our Christian freehold, whereof *Christ* has made the purchase with his own blood.

Two things there are which the *Enquirér* has lustily promised us, and therefore we may confidently expect from him: first, that he will give us the *true notion*, and secondly, the *due extent of Christian Liberty*; and he has freed his name pretty well, for first he has made it a *meer notion*, and then laid an extent upon it, that is, he has seized it into his own hands, upon pretence for the Magistrates use.

[1.] And first for his *true Notion*, (for none cry stinking Mackerel) there are two things also very considerable; the liberality of his *Concessions*, and the policy of his *Retractions*. He makes us fair *large Deeds*, but with a *secret power of Revocation* frustrates all; so that when we come to cast up our accounts, we must say, with that bewildred Clyent, in the *Comædian*, 'when he had advised with his brace of Advocates; *Probre fecistis, incertior sum multò quàm dudum.*

(1.) For his *Concessions*, they are truly noble and generous, and such as would heal us all.

§ 1. Concession, p. 88. *When the Gospel was fully published, then the aforesaid inclosure is laid open, and all Nations invited into the Society of the Church upon equal terms, neither Party being bound to those nice laws of Moses, nor to any other, but those plain and reasonable ones contained in the Gospel: This is certainly the great year of Jubilee!* and will he not deserve to be shut out for ever, that shall refuse so free an invitation? Is he a reasonable creature that refuses the *plain and reasonable terms* of Communion, contained in the Gospel? what a hideous monster would a Schismatick be, did Churches keep to these Terms? But his limitation retracts all this again.

— And such other (not contradictory to them) as publick wisdom, peace, and charity, shall dictate and recommend. Now you have it! Thus the Crane most courteously invited the Fox to dinner, but fitted him with such terms of communion, that unless he could stretch his neck as long as hers, he shall have his belly full of nothing but hunger: *Esurire licet, gustare non licet.*

It minds me of the story of *Sanctius* the King of Arragon's Brother,



Brother, who marching against the *Saracens*, diverted himself a while at *Rome*; the bountifull *Pope*, who is always prodigal of what costs him nothing, causes him to be proclaimed, *Sanctius by the Grace of God King of Egypt*, &c. The noise of Trumpets calls him to the *Belcony*, and he asks what was the matter? he was answered, that his *Holiness* had presented him with the entire Kingdom of *Egypt*; presently he commands his own Trumpeters to go, and salute the *Pope* in requital. *Caliph of Baldash*: Thus has the *Enquirer* gratified us with an empty Concession, which by his retraction is *Δωρον ἄδωρον*. I shall not need to observe to the Reader the egregious folly of such Propositions. We are not bound to the *Laws of Moses* (i. e. as Terms of Communion) nor any other, but such other—That is, we had been free, but that we are in bondage. Negatives are infinite; and under that one word [such others] we may be pester'd with more than those nice *Laws of Moses*. For, 1. Who can tell what *publick Wisdom* may determin? the publick Wisdom of *Italy*, and *Spain*, has introduced such a lumber of those other Terms, as hath eaten out almost all Religion, with the Divertisements of *Judaical*, *Paganical*, whimsical Constitutions: The publick Wisdom of *Abassia* has introduced *Circumcision* it self, and no thanks to these Principles, or the Discourses of *Erastian Novellists*, that the case is better with us.

2. *Peace and Charity* requires no other Terms then those plain ones laid down in the *Gospel*; *Charity* teaches us not to lay stumbling blocks in the way of those that will come towards the Church; *Peace* requires us to unite upon *Christs own Terms*; but the name of *Peace* is often used to destroy the thing: so *Austin* of old, *Ecclesia nomine armamini & contra Ecclesiam Domicatis*. Thus are we gogled to part with our *Christian Liberty* for *Peace*, when as the parting with the Ceremonies would secure both *Peace*, *Charity*, and *Christian Liberty*. 3. It's very childish to put the determination of these other Terms of Communion upon the *Tresviri*, *publick Wisdom*, *Peace*, and *Charity*. For what if they accord not in their votes about the Terms? what if perhaps *publick Wisdom* should clash with *Charity*? *Charity* should say, I will have no Terms of Communion, that may exclude persons of honest hearts, though weaker intellectuals; but *publick Wisdom* should contend for some other intercalated conditions, which may render Divine Institutions more august and solemn.

solemn. 4. No publick Wisdom can possibly determin upon those other Terms, in a way that shall secure the interests of Charity, nor in what cases I am bound for her sake to restrain my self in the use of my *Christian Liberty*. For the prudent admeasurement between my *Christian Liberty*, and my Charity to my *Christian Neighbour*, depends upon the view of the particular circumstances of time, place, person, which cannot come under the prospect of *publick Wisdom*: Suppose a Command were given forth from publick Wisdom, that I should at such a time, and in such a place, drive a Coach with violence down the high-way, and when I come to execute this command; I find multitudes of little Children playing in that high-way; the circumstance of these persons was not foreseen by *publick Wisdom*; must that therefore take place of my Charity to destroy the lives of these little ones, or my charity submit to *publick Wisdom*, and fall pell-mell in amongst them? Our Saviour has commanded us not to offend any of his little ones, telling me that if I do, *It were better that a millstone were hang'd about my neck, and I cast into the sea*. Publick Wisdom may perhaps command me to do something not sinfull in it self, but when I come to obey, I find evidently it must scandalize them; I refer it to Charity, Peace, and Prudence to determin this case between them.

§. 2. His second generous Concession is. *There lies now no more bonds upon the consciences of Christians, than did upon the ancient Patriarchs, saving those improvements our Saviour has made upon the law of Nature, and those few positive Institutions of his expressly set down in the Gospel*. And what a blessed day were it with the Christian world if we might see this made good! This would shut out of doors all those *Janus Articles*, penn'd by wise Reconcilers, to persuade the combating parties first to shake hands, and then to fall more furiously to cudgels. This would shut out of doors all human Impositions, forstalling our Communion with the Christian Church.

But now mark the Retraction. — *And that men obeying these are at liberty to conform to whatsoever common Reason, Equity and publick Authority shall impose*. Had he not turn'd wrong at the hedge corner, it should have follow'd thus. — *And that men obeying these, are at liberty to enjoy all the priviledges of the Gospel*. But, 1. Is not this a broad Contradiction, that there's no more bonds upon our Consciences, than upon the Patriarchs, and yet we are bound to submit to those other Terms, imposed

*imposed by publick Authority? That is, we are at liberty upon their Terms: And we may serve God as cheap as they, but that we must serve him at dearer rates: Did Abraham receive the modes of worshipping God from Gerar, or the Terms of serving God from Egypt: and yet those Kings where he sojourn'd were friendly, and extended their Royal bounty to him. 2. We are at Liberty to conform to whatsoever common Reason, Equity and publick Authority shall impose: At Liberty to conform? but are we at Liberty not to conform, if common Reason oppose publick Determination? It's an idle thing to put the determination of my Liberty upon Reason, Equity and Authority, unless we were assured they should always agree, which yet in some countries may not be till the secular Games, or the Greek Calends. 3. This is in effect to say, that if we obey what Christ commands us, we are at Liberty to give away our Liberty in all the rest: whereas our Liberty was given us, not to give it away at a clap, but to dispense it in parcels, as weak christians have occasion to borrow of us.*

§ 3. He concedes yet further, for Liberality grows upon his good Nature. *Our Christian enfranchisement discharges us not onely from a necessity of observing the Law of Moses, and the Rites of Judaism, but further, and especially sets us at Liberty to pursue our own Reason. And can he pretend to be a Rational creature, that will not submit to it's Dictates? If ever Christian Liberty have scope enough, it must be when it expatiates in the fields of our own Reason, I am confident, the most straight-laced Precisian cannot pretend he is pinch'd: But now the Limitation! — And to obey any Laws of men that shall not contradict the express Laws of Scriptures.*

*I suppose there are very few or none in the world that form their Laws expressly contrary to Scripture Laws, and yet they make such as may as effectually frustrate the design of Scripture Laws, as if they had in terms point blank contradicted them: a rare Liberty this is; and was the foundation of that Gentlemans humour, who profess'd he would Preach in a Fools coat, if the King should command him. For I do not remember that that contradicts any express Law: amongst all the crafty devices of the Devil to induce our Grand-mother Eve to eat of the tree of Knowledge; and of all the weak excuses of Eve for eating of that tree, I wonder: This was not thought on, that it was not contrary to any express Law of God. For, Gen. 1. 16. God commanded the man saying, of every Tree of the Garden thou may'st freely eat: But of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil thou*

thou shalt not eat: But it seems the Devil had not learnt the Sophistry to evade the precept, because the *express Law* was given to the man, and not to the woman: There are *Consequential Laws* which we have no liberty to contradict: That a Minister contradict not, destroy not the ends of his Ministry; a Christian the ends of his Christianity: And it had been impossible that all Negatives should be expressed, *Thou shalt not stand upon thy head: Thou shalt not wear a Fools coat: Thou shalt not play at Dice, or Cards, in the worship of God: but thus he thinks he has made good provision for a safe conformity to the ceremonies, because it is not said; Thou shalt not use the Cross in Baptism; Thou shalt not use Cream, Oyl, Spittle, Thou shalt not conjure out the Devil.* At which back-door came in all the superstitious fopperies of Rome. And with this passport we may travel all over the world, from Rome to the Port, from thence amongst the Tartars, and Chineses, and conform to all, for perhaps we shall not meet with one Constitution that contradicts an *express Law of Scripture.*

4. *Concession, p. 191.* I have a power in *utramque*, and may do, or leave undone all those matters that are not defined in Scripture. This indeed make amends for all: for if it be part of my Liberty to leave undone what's not defined there, as well as to do what is not so, I have no great Reason to complain for want of Liberty; but yet there is a restriction behind that recalls one half of this---According as publick Laws and the ends of all Society, shall require. Thus all along the Reader will observe that he seems to Retreat from his Fort in the Concession, and when we are mounted he springs his Mine, and blows us all up, with his Retraction. The summe of this liberty then is thus much: we have a liberty in *utramque*, but you shall be determined to one: you may do which you will, provided you do which another commands you; you may pursue your own Reason, provide you do not Pursue it, but the publick wisdom; you are not tyed up to any other institutions, save onely those plain ones of the Gospel, provided you be obliged to such other as Authority Commands. This is such an *utramque*, that I have been studying what should be the Substantive to it, and I cannot imagine what, unless it be in *utramque*, either a good benefice, or a comfortable importance: I shall further offer these things.

1. Christian Liberty may be restrained by Publick Authority, and by private Reason, but if publick Authority restrain it one way, and my private Reason, would restrain it another, and the publick

Authority

Authority shall carry it against my own Reason, not only *Christian*, but *Humane Liberty* is violated.

2. The perpetual determining of my liberty to *one part*, that I may in *no case* act the *other way*, whether it be by an *external compulsary power*, or by *my own Superstition*, is a violation and destruction of my *Christian Liberty*.

3. *Authority, Peace, Charity* prevailing with *my Reason*, to determine *one way*, will not violate *Christian Liberty*, for when the great ends of *Peace and Charity* shall cease to be obtained by such determination, it's supposed also that *Reason will cease*, and *Authority ought to cease*, to continue such determination.

4. If *Peace and Charity* shall cease to call for such a determination *ad unum*, and thereupon *my Reason* cease to put me upon such a determination, and yet *Authority* shall continue its determination; my *Christian Liberty* will warrant me to follow my *own Reason*.

That which was the intolerable burthen of the Jews, which they were not able to bear, our Enquirer tells, p. 186. was especially this: *That the Law of Moses enjoyn'd a great number of little Observances, which by their multitude were hard to be remembered, by their Nicety difficult to be observed, and by their meer positive Nature, and having no essential goodness in themselves, had less power upon the Consciences of Men, to awaken their care and diligence about them; and because it's hard for the mind of man to attend to many things at once, especially if also the things in which his care and obedience is required, be such as are not enacted in his Conscience, and when he can see no other Reason of, or advantage by his obedience but merely his obedience, therefore was that Law called impossible.* This, say the Dissenters, would be their case, should they submit to what the Enquirer pleads for, and therefore an infringement of their *Christian Liberty*.

There is one Text of Scripture by which he will prove that his is the true Notion of *Christian Liberty*: *The Apostle* (says he) *in several of his Epistles*, but especially that to the *Romans*, enjoins the *Christians* in their scruples about eating of certain Meats, and in the Conduct of themselves to consult *Charity* towards their *weak Brethren*, the *peace of the Church*, and their own *Edification*: to which purpose he advises us to see *Rom. 14.* and *Chap. 15.* Now if the Reader will be Ruled by me, we will venture for one quarter of an hour to look into those places, let the danger be what it will, and I am confident we shall not find one *Christian Liberty* determinable by any outward power: v. 3.

The Apostle lays down the only true way of maintaining Peace and Love amongst Christians under their various apprehensions, and various practises. *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth.* And to this Rule the Canons of 1640. did attend, *Can. 8.* We recommending (not commanding) to the serious Consideration of all good People, The doing Reverence and Obeisance at their coming in, and going out of the Churches, Chancels, and Chappels, in the practise or omission of which Rite they desire that the Rule of Charity, prescribed by the Apostle, may be observed. That they which use this Rite despise not them which use it not, and that they who use it not, condemn not those that use it. Which Rule was it applied to all other matters of the like Nature, would undoubtedly preserve what of Love is left, and recover that measure of Christian amity, which is lost. Peace may be had under differing Notions about indifferent things, and peace may be had under differing practises suitable to those differing Notions, not by screwing up the weak to the latitude which the strong allows himself, nor by pulling down the strong to the narrow practises, wherein the weak are confined, but by the strong Christians not despising the weak, and the weak Christians not judging his more grown, and stronger Brother; v. 4. The Apostle gives a Reason against this uncharitable judgment: *who art thou that judgest another mans Servant?* Every Christian as to his Conscience, is *Alieni fori*, the Servant of God: And if he be summon'd before a Forreign Tribunal, may plead, *It is Coram non Judice.* To his own Master he standeth or falleth: v. 5. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind: The things before may perhaps be indifferent in themselves, but yet if we have not a full assurance that they are so, we are bound to suspend our act. For, as our rejoycing must be in our selves, and not in another, so must our Satisfaction: 'Tis not the clearness of a practise in anothers mind that will warrant my acting. I must be fully satisfied in my own mind, v. 13. The Apostle lays down an excellent Rule for the prudent restraint of our Christian Liberty. *Let us not therefore judge one another, but let every man judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his Brothers way.* If my Christian Liberty will warrant me to act, yet Christian Charity will teach me to moderate my self in the use of that liberty, when such acting would occasion the sin of him that is not so perswaded of the Lawfullness of my Act; which is to be limited to things of this Nature whereof he treats, namely, things indifferēt; for if my Brother will

will be offended at what God has made my duty, there's no Remedy, but that he lay aside his *unjust offence*, and not that I lay aside my *necessary duty*: v. 15. The Apostle gives a Reason of his former Rule: *If thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat, then walkest thou not Charitably*; And much more if he be scandalized, and drawn into sin: Is it not a most unchristian humour to insist so peremptorily upon *doing*, because in it self *Lawful*; when Charity countermands that *doing*, and therefore 'tis *unlawful in the use*. *Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ dyed*: surely thou hast little value for a Soul Redeemed by the Blood of Christ, if thou wilt for a *sorry indifferent thing* hazard its eternal damnation: Our liberty to act must stand out of the way, when a *Brothers Soul* comes in place; v. 19 *Let us follow the things that make for Peace, and the things may edifie one another*. Here we have another Rule for the restraint of our liberty in things indifferent: When the using my liberty would disturb the peace of the Church, I must cease to act: for the *strong* may forbear what he judges *Lawful*, and yet the *weak* cannot do what he judges *sinful*: And therefore to the *strong* he speaks thus, v. 22. *Hast thou Faith have it to thy self before God*: Art thou perswaded such a thing is *Lawful*, notwithstanding the many violent presumptions of others of its sinfulness, keep thy judgment to thy self; trouble not the Church with thy Orations, let thy disputing Talent yield to the weak judgment of others. But to the weak he speaks thus, v. 23. *He that doubteth is damned if he eat; because he eateth not of Faith, for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin*.

All this while here's not one syllable of restraining Christian Liberty by the Authority of another by outward force and violence, all must be determined by a Christians own Prudence, as moved by the edification of anothers Charity to his Soul, and the peace of the Community: not a word to consult my own secular advantage and emolument; Not a letter that Conscience, Christian Liberty, Private Wisdom, my own Reason must be impressed to militate under the command and conduct of the publick wisdom, the publick Reason, or the publick Conscience.

That is therefore the thing which he must bring about by some links of Consequences, some trains of deductions; And he advances towards his conclusion, by winding stairs, that we may be lead *sensum sine sensu* to the top of his matter, to the height of his design without taking notice of our ascent, and the whole contrivance



The Apostle lays down the only true way of maintaining Peace and Love amongst Christians under their various apprehensions, and various practises. *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth.* And to this Rule the Canons of 1640. did attend, *Can. 8.* We recommending (not commanding) *to the serious Consideration of all good People, The doing Reverence and Obeisance at their coming in, and going out of the Churches, Chancels, and Chappels, in the practise or omission of which Rite they desire that the Rule of Charity, prescribed by the Apostle, may be observed. That they which use this Rite despise not them which use it not, and that they who use it not, condemn not those that use it.* Which Rule was it applied to all other matters of the like Nature, would undoubtedly preserve what of Love is left, and recover that measure of Christian amity, which is lost. Peace may be had under differing Notions about indifferent things, and peace may be had under differing practises suitable to those differing Notions, not by screwing up the weak to the latitude which the strong allows himself, nor by pulling down the strong to the narrow practises, wherein the weak are confined, but by the strong Christians not despising the weak, and the weak Christians not judging his more grown, and stronger Brother; v. 4. The Apostle gives a Reason against this uncharitable judgment: *who art thou that judgest another mans Servant?* Every Christian as to his Conscience, is *Alieni fori*, the Servant of God: And if he be summon'd before a Forreign Tribunal, may plead, *It is Coram non Judice.* To his own Master he standeth or falleth: v. 5. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind: The things before may perhaps be indifferent in themselves, but yet if we have not a full assurance that they are so, we are bound to suspend our ass. For, as our rejoycing must be in our selves, and not in another, so must our Satisfaction: 'Tis not the cleareness of a practise in anothers mind that will warrant my acting, I must be fully satisfied in my own mind, v. 13. The Apostle lays down an excellent Rule for the prudent restraint of our Christian Liberty. *Let us not therefore judge one another, but let every man judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his Brothers way.* If my Christian Liberty will warrant me to ass, yet Christian Charity will teach me to moderate my self in the use of that liberty, when such acting would occasion the sin of him that is not so perswaded of the Lawfullness of my Fact; which is to be limited to things of this Nature whereof he treats, namely, things indifferēt; for if my Brother will

will be offended at what God has made my duty, there's no Remedy, but that he lay aside his *unjust offence*, and not that I lay aside my *necessary duty*: v. 15. The Apostle gives a Reason of his former Rule: *If thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat, then walkest thou not Charitably*; And much more if he be scandalized, and drawn into sin: Is it not a most unchristian humour to insist so peremptorily upon *doing*, because in it self *Lawful*; when Charity countermands that *doing*, and therefore 'tis *unlawful in the use*. *Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ dyed*: surely thou hast little value for a Soul Redeemed by the Blood of Christ, if thou wilt for a *sorry indifferent thing* hazard its eternal damnation: Our liberty to *act* must stand out of the way, when a *Brothers Soul* comes in place; v. 19 *Let us follow the things that make for Peace, and the things may edifie one another*. Here we have another Rule for the restraint of our liberty in things indifferent: When the using my liberty would disturb the peace of the Church, I must cease to *act*: for the *strong* may forbear what he judges *Lawful*, and yet the *weak* cannot do what he judges *sinful*: And therefore to the *strong* he speaks thus, v. 22. *Hast thou Faith have it to thy self before God*: Art thou perswaded such a thing is *Lawful*, notwithstanding the many violent presumptions of others of its sinfulness, keep thy judgment to thy self; trouble not the Church with thy Orations, let thy disputing Talent yield to the weak judgment of others. But to the weak he speaks thus, v. 23. *He that doubteth is damned if he eat; because he eateth not of Faith, for whatsoever is not of Faith is sin*.

All this while here's not one syllable of restraining Christian Liberty by the Authority of another by outward force and violence, all must be determined by a Christians own Prudence, as moved by the edification of anothers Charity to his Soul, and the peace of the Community: not a word to consult my own secular advantage and emolument; Not a letter that Conscience, Christian Liberty, Private Wisdom, my own Reason must be impressed to militate under the command and conduct of the publick wisdom, the publick Reason, or the publick Conscience.

That is therefore the thing which he must bring about by some links of Consequences, some trains of deductions; And he advances towards his conclusion, by winding stairs, that we may be lead *sensum sine sensu* to the top of his matter, to the height of his design without taking notice of our ascent, and the whole contrivance

of this Chap. lyes in the *dexterous* management of this one Engin.

(1.) His first *Postulatum* is this: *That Christian liberty doth consist in a freedom in utramque: ( pray do not mistake him ) that is, that antecedently to the Considerations of Prudence, Peace and Charity, it's equally in the power of a Christian to do or not to do, any, or all those things that are not expressly forbidden by the holy Scriptures. Very good! Then I will assume: But to love God with all my Heart, and Soul, and Strength, is one of those things which God hath not expressly forbidden in the Holy Scriptnre: therefore antecedently to the Considerations of Prudence, Peace and Charity. It's in the power of a Christian to love, or not to love God with all his heart, and that Christian liberty consists in this freedom in utramque.*

I am not so uncharitable as to think that the *Enquirer* owns this conclusion, or that any principle he holds will infer it: All I note it for is to evince to him, that he has worded his matters besides his own intention, and that he intended really to have said: *That Antecedently to the Considerations of Prudence and Charity, it's equally in the power of a Christian to do or not to do, any or all those things that are not expressly forbidden by, nor contradict the express laws of the Scriptures. And taking the words according to the presumption of his meaning and not the letter, I say, 1. Here's something more than Truth. That Christian Liberty gives us a power to do what is not expressly forbidden: many things are forbidden by consequence, which are not expressly forbidden. I pray shew me an express prohibition to recognize the Popes Supremacy; To subscribe the Tridentine Decrees. And if this be part of the Enquirers Christian Liberty, to do what is not expressly forbidden, I hope he will not find himself agrieved if we judge that he, and some others of the same Latitude, are not at so irreconcilable a distance from Rome, as they would be thought.*

2. As all is not Truth, so neither is this the whole Truth: For Christian liberty gives us a Power to do, or not do the things neither commanded, nor forbidden, not onely Antecedently to the considerations of Prudence, Peace and Charity, but also, First, Subsequently to those considerations: that is, as soon as ever those considerations shall cease; and, Secondly, Concomitantly with those considerations; that is, further they shall reach: For though I suspend my act in charity to my weak Brother, yet am I impowred to Act at the same time out of the Cognizance of my weak Brother; and as soon as those considerations of Peace and Charity shall vanish, no other confide-

considerations separate from them, ought to keep the restraint on foot, but my liberty recovers its former lustre.

3. There is much ambiguity in the jumbling the considerations of *prudence, peace, and charity* together; for the considerations of *peace and charity* are *objective*, such as I am to consider as the motives and inducements to restrain my Liberty; but the consideration of *prudence* is *subjective*, that is, *prudence* is that virtue which is to make a judgment, when, and in what cases, those two, *peace and charity*, are considerations sufficient to enforce such a restraint; so that, would we speak plain *English*, the matter amounts to no more than this, that antecedently to my prudent consideration of the concerns of *peace and charity*, I may do, or not do, whatsoever is in it self indifferent; which truth will be too feeble a foundation to erect his intended superstructure upon.

(2.) His second *Postulatum* is this; That it is no infringement, but an exercise of this liberty, actually to be determined to that side, towards which *prudence* or *charity* shall incline; though in the mean time the other side be in general as lawfull as that: It would ill become me to teach him how to word his own Conceptions, though I should rather have chosen to have expressed my self, not disjunctively, [to that side towards which *prudence* or *charity* shall incline] but rather conjunctively, [*prudence and charity*] or most properly [*prudence at the invitation of charity*] for *prudence* inclines me neither one way nor other, further than as she is directed by the considerations of *peace and charity*, the good of my self and neighbour, nor can the interests of these two ever be divided. But I answer,

1. That it is no infringement of *Christian liberty*, for *prudence* to determin upon mine own act; as that I will not do an indifferent thing, when *Peace*, and the *Spiritual good* of my Brother prohibit me; because the *Scripture*, which contains the *Charter of Christian liberty*, has also directed my *prudence*, thus, and in this case to restrain it: but yet (which is the thing he drives at) to be determined to one side by outward power, civil force, naked authority or will, when my own reason can see no *prudence* in such a determination, is an evident infringement of my liberty: so that to be determined to one side may be an infringement, when I am determined by violence or menaces; and yet to determin my self upon the considerations of *Charity and Peace*, may be none; for in the former case, I see no reason of my

obedience; but my obedience; but in the latter I am determined by my own election, upon rational grounds, becoming a rational creature.

2. Though a prudential determination not to act, at the request or command of peace and charity, when otherwise I might have acted, be no infringement of my radical Liberty, yet it is a restraint of my liberty, which the Enquirer calls, p. 208. *A denying himself some part of his liberty, and therefore it seems improperly called an exercise of liberty; 'tis indeed an exercise of my prudence, an exercise of my charity, but hardly an exercise of my liberty, further than as the will is the principle of such restraint and determination.*

3. Though Prudence may teach me not to act, but to adhere to the side of Charity, yet prudence must not take her measures for not acting from such poor, low, selfish considerations as the saving or gaining those outward advantages to my self, which are the great idols of Prudence falsely so called, which is no better than carnal policy, and sinfull selfishness; but from the interest of Gods glory, the advancement of his Gospel, and all this *bonâ fide*, for if Prudence mistakes in her reckonings, an imaginary good end will not indemnify, and save her harmless.

(3.) *These two points thus gained (as the Enquirer fancies) will give abundant foundation for a third to be inferred from them, viz. That whatsoever is so free to me, that I may do it, or not do it, according as I shall be inclined by the considerations of brotherly charity and compassion, must of necessity be also, as free to me to obey the Magistrate, and serve publick peace, and order in.*

Let us but resolve this unwieldy Proposition into its distinct branches, and we shall need no more to expose its nakedness.

1. *Whatsoever I may do at the command of Charity, I may do at the command of Authority in order to publick peace:* Now to furnish him with a minor; but I may practise the Ceremonies at the command of charity, therefore I may practise them at the command of authority in order to publick peace. And now for the proof of the minor we are as far to seek as ever.

This then is the Quintessence of his Reasonings, the utmost resort of all the wit and learning of this Chapter, which in other, and more advantageous words to his purpose he gives us thus: *Whatsoever I may do in compassion to my Brothers infirmity, surely that I may much more do in reverence to Gods Ordinance, the*  
lawfull

*lawfull Magistrate*, which is the point I have all this while drove at. But this Conclusion, howe he seems cock-sure of it, will no ways follow from those premises; and the fallacy of it is so thin, that its transparent to the weakest eye. In the first *postulatum* he allows a freedom to act, in *utramque*, antecedently to the considerations of prudence, peace and charity. In the second he asserts, that its no infringement of this Liberty, to be determined to one side by prudence or charity. In his third, that we may (and therefore may) act or not act, according as we shall be determined by Authority. I shall sum up my Answer in these particulars, and conclude.

§ 1. Though the *lawfull Magistrate be Gods Ordinance*, yet it remains a question undecided, whether he be *Gods Ordinance* so far, and for that end, to determin of things indifferent, antecedently to the determination of Gods providence, by gathering together all due circumstances, which ought to determin the natural indifferency of the things aforesaid: Many things are true *secundum quid*, which are not so *simpliciter*. But if he shall judge it a prize worth all his labour to impose upon us with so broad Sophism, much good may his own dream do him.

§ 2. Though the *lawfull Magistrate be Gods Ordinance*, yet its a greater Question still whether he may determin my Liberty in *utramque*, to the one side, when Charity would determin it to the other? that is, whether he has power to command me to act, when Charity prohibits me to act, or make it my duty to move, when Charity commands me to stand still.

It's true, the concerns of a true and desirable peace and charity are inseparable; nothing can advance the design of the former, but what does really subserve the interest of the latter; for so has the Apostle conjoyn'd them, *Rom. 14. 19. Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another.*

Whatsoever advances the edification of my Brother, advances also Peace, unless imprudent men have made the terms of Peace so desperate, that 'tis not attainable, without the ruine of Charity, which the *Enquirer* confesses an essential part of our Religion: but yet 'tis possible, that the command of a Magistrate may oppose the concerns of Charity, in which case, I think without offence I may say, he is none of Gods Ordinance to that end and purpose, nor has God given me any liberty to obey in that case: and as such a Command would be a

direct invasion of my Christian Liberty, so obedience to such a Command would be a plain betraying of it : If therefore the freedom to act *in utramque* be determined to *the one side*, by Charity, I have no freedom (under that posture of circumstances) to submit to a determination to *the other side* at the command of Authority.

§ 3. As the *lawfull Magistrate is Gods Ordinance*, so is it an *express ordinance* of the same God, not to use my Liberty in indifferent things, when by such use *my Brother is made weak*, or *stumbled or offended*, Rom. 14. 21. And it is a hard way of concluding, That what *one Ordinance of God countermands*, that I may do at *the command of another*. God has often superseded *general commands* by *special ones*, but I find not that he has instituted any *general Ordinance* to suspend the duties of a *special command*. He that says, *If thy brother be offended, eat not*, has given no power to any to say, *Though thy brother be offended, yet eat*: And if our own Prudence upon the view of all circumstances shall determin, notwithstanding a command to act by the Magistrate, yet cannot this be interpreted *irreverence to Gods Ordinance the lawfull Magistrate*, unless we will suppose, that by shewing obedience to *the one*, we must be irreverent to *the other* of Gods Ordinances.

§ 4. Christian Liberty is committed to every Christian to keep for *the use and behoof of his weak Brother*, and not to resign at *the meer pleasure* of another : publick Peace and Charity shall not need to weigh against one another, for their interests sweetly meet together, kiss each other, *Christian liberty* has intitled me to a right in things indifferent ; *Prudence* will direct me how to use it for my own Spiritual benefit ; *Charity* will oblige me to manage it for the advantage of my weak Brother, and the Command of God justify me if I resign it not up to meer will and pleasure, or any thing that shal come in competition with it.

§ 5. The Magistrate himself is Gods Ordinance, the great Officer and Minister of Jesus Christ, to secure and preserve the *great Charter of Christian Liberty*, sacred and inviolate, against all the encroachments of those, who would commit a rape upon a privilege, in it self so innocent, to others so useful, and in the price paid for it so invaluablely dear and precious.

The sum of which is thus much, that though Charity and Peace are always agreed when to use, when to restrain my liberty, yet if any power without reference to the concerns

of



of these shall endeavour to restrain my liberty, by commanding me to do what Reason and Prudence shall inform me, are repugnant to those ends; such command is a plain infringement of my liberty, and my obedience a plain abuse of my liberty, unless we can imagin, that its an exercise of my *Christian Liberty*, to act against the great ends of Christianity, or an exercise of my freedom, to run against the dictates of my Judgment and Conscience.

To conclude therefore, if this be that great thing, he has *all this while* drove at, I must tell him, he drives at too furious a rate for me to keep pace with him; but thus would *Phaeton* drive, though he set the world on fire; such was *Jehu's* career, though he thought himself more than God; and so have I seen your hair-brain'd Drivers resolve to *whistle out their whistle*, though the cart turn over.

#### CHAP. VIII.

*Of a Tender Conscience, what it is, and its Privileges?*

IT was a malicious artifice of *Julian the Apostate*, to erect the images of the Heathen gods in the *Forum* near his own statue, reducing hereby the Christians to this *Dilemma*, either to seem to worship the Images, whilst they revered his Statue, or condemn their Sovereign, by refusing to bow before the Images; into the same streights would the Masters of Ceremonies bring us; that either our *Loyalty* must argue us into a *Conformity* to their intentions; or *Non-conformity* shall be an interpretative contempt of *Authority*: Thus has it ever been a successfull Policy to twist their own Concerns with those of Majesty and Royalty, that they may not be separated. And when they have laid up their little knacks amongst the sacred *κεκρυμμένα*, in his Majesties Jewel house, to touch one Ceremony, isto steal the Crown.

*Conscience* has ever hitherto maintained a good repute amongst the more civiliz'd part of mankind, and he been adjudged a person unmeet for converse, that should once prostitute and debauch it; It will therefore be expedient at least, first to represent it as an *usurper*, and then to execute it as a *traitor*.

I pittied that innocent person, who being fast asleep, and dreaming no harm, an assassinate puts into his hand the bloody knife

knife wherewith he had committed an execrable murther; upon which violent presumption being apprehended, he is arraign'd, condemn'd, executed.

Thus the *Jews* found no better way to deliver our *B. Saviour* over to the secular Powers, than to misrepresent him as an enemy to the *Temple and Caesar*, Church and State; and when they had arrayed him in a Mock-robe, put a Reed-scepter in his hand, and a Crown of Thorns on his head, lead him out with triumph to be crucified.

The *Enquirer* being very sensible, that this *Conscience* has been an old enemy to the dear concerns of Ceremony, tells us feelingly, That unless we can pull down this usurper, we must look for no *Magistracy*; and except we discover the weakness and absurdity of this *Pretension*, all endeavours of restoring Uniformity in the Church, will be vain and useless.

The master-piece of *Jezebel's* policy was, to make *Naboth* more than he desired to be, that he might be really less than he deserved to be. 1 *Kin.* 21. 9. Proclaim a fast, and set *Naboth* on high among the people; and set two men, sons of Belial to bear false witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the King, then carry him out, and stone him that he may dye.

This *Conscience* (says he) is thought to have not only a privilege, but a kind of prerogative, to carry with it an exemption from all humane Laws, but especially Ecclesiastical; it pretends to be Gods peculiar, and exempt from any inferior Cognizance; nay, it looks like a Dictatorial Authority, and seems to be *Legibus soluta*. This (they would make us believe) can limit the Magistrate, null Laws, forbid Execution, and which is more, change the very nature of things, and make that good and holy, which was wicked and rebellious before: This can canonize any Opinion, legitimate any Action, warrant any extravagancy in the person that owns it; whatsoever he thinks, can be no Heresie, and whatsoever he does can be no sin.

In which charge he hath sprinkled here and there a word of Truth, for he that would be believed in a great falsehood, must be sure to intersperse some little verities. *Conscience* is a most absolute Monarch indeed, if it has all these prerogatives, of his own *Conscience*, to bear false witness against his neighbour; and if we call things by their proper names, by unworthy, scandalous insinuations, sinister reflexions, and false accusations against Dissenters, to provoke the Magistrate to prescribe them as Out-laws. But I answer.

§ 1. The

§. 1. The highest immunities I ever meet with, ascribed to Conscience are in Bishop Saunderson, a most zealous stickler for Ceremonies, Serm. on Rom. 14. 23. *There cannot (says he) be imagined a higher contempt of God, than for a man to despise the power of his own Conscience, which is the highest under heaven, as being Gods most immediate Deputy for the ordering his life and ways; Βεβαιὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἡ συνείσθησις ὁμοῦ.* Could the Heathen say, Conscience is a God to all man, which is somewhat a higher note than the Enquirer makes the Dissenters sing; that it pretends to be Gods peculiar, and is exempt from any inferior cognizance.

§ 2. It's a most injurious charge, if applied to Non-conformists, that Conscience can alter the nature of things, make that good which was wicked and rebellious before, &c. All they say in this particular is with Ames. *Thest. de Consc. 18.* "Tanto vis est Conscientiæ, ut actionem suâ naturâ mediam, efficiat bonam vel malam; & suâ naturâ bonam, reddat malam, quamvis illam quæ suâ naturâ mala est, non possit convertere in bonam. So great is the power of Conscience, that it can make an indifferent to become either good or evil (*viz.* to the person) and an action, in its own nature good, to become evil; although it cannot make that which is in its own nature evil, to become good. Which powers are clearly ascribed to Conscience by the Apostle. 1. The power to make an indifferent, or good action in it self, to become evil to him that judgeth it to be evil, and yet will venture upon it, Rom. 14. 14. *To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* 2. Its power to make an indifferent thing good, using it to Gods Glory, with all other due circumstances, is clear also from Tit. 1. 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure.* But that it can alter the nature of things, that it can make an action evil in it self to become good, that it can null Laws, are such powers, as no Casuists have ever attributed to it, but those whose Consciences carry an exemption from any necessity of speaking truth, when 'tis in order to the advancement of their Cause. But it is too common for men to charge others with the wickedness of their own thoughts and hearts, and what was once their own old Crime, to make other mens new accusations.

§ 2. As to the power of Conscience to excuse error from Heresie; we say, that there may be a material Heresie, which is not formally so; what a man judges to be a real Truth, though possibly it may be a dangerous error; yet unless there was *prava dispositio*, as the cause of that error, or something of ob-  
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*stinacy of the will in adhering to it ; Errour and Heterodoxy it is, but Heresie it cannot be ; that is, it will not denominate the person a Heretick : Thus the learned and judicious Mr. Hales, Hiresie is an act of the will, not of the reason, and is indeed a lye, not a mistake ; for else how could that saying of Austin be true. Errare possum, Hereticus esse nolo, I may possibly mistake, but am resolved never to be an Heretick, that is, by a tenacious and obstinate abetting any mistake after Conviction.*

There are three things, which we are obliged to wait upon our Enquirer in. 1. Whilst he entertains us with his Discourse what Conscience is. 2. What a tender Conscience is ? 3. What privileges or exemptions it may claim to.

[ 1. ] *What Conscience is ? now ( says he ) if men loved plain English, and to understand what they say, it is plainly this, and no more ; a mans own mind, or understanding, under the distinct consideration of reflecting upon himself, his own actions and duty. He may call this plain English, if he pleases, define and describe his own Conscience how he will, but we poor people are edified much what as with the Rhemists Parascève, Azymes and Paraclete, who seeing there was no remedy but they must translate, were resolved that few should be the wiser for the Translation.*

There are some things that look oddly in this Description.

§ 1. It seems very improper to assign the mind or understanding for the genus of Conscience. For Conscience is not a faculty, but an act seated in a faculty ; or the exercise of the faculty of the understanding, putting the will upon operation : Thus that fore-mentioned Bishop, *ibid. The Will of man ( which is the fountain whence all our actions immediately flow ) should conform it self to the judgment of the practick understanding, as to its immediate rule, and yield it self to be guided by it. And indeed the office of Conscience, is not onely to judge what is good or evil, according to those notices it has of God from the light of Nature and Scripture, nor only to take cognizance whether the will has obey'd those dictates of the practick understanding, but to be a monitor and counsellor, nay a commander to the will to act according to its discoveries of good or evil. This is good, therefore I charge thee to do it ; and this is evil, therefore I command thee to avoid it.*

§ 2. It seems very defective, in that he tells us of the mind reflecting upon actions, and yet mentions not with reference to whose authority it is so pragmatikal, as to meddle with those actions ;

ons; whereas all that *Conscience* dictates as a counsellor; all that *Conscience* determins as a Judge, is in the name of the *Supream and Sovereign Jehovah*. *Jam. 4. 12.* There's one *Law-giver* who is able to save, and to destroy, and who art thou that judgest another? *Rom. 14. 4.* Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.

§ 3. His Description seems very lame, in that he makes the whole employment of *Conscience* to be reflection; whereas 'tis in its commission to dictate before the fact, as well as to reflect upon the fact. It teaches what we ought to do, as well as enquires and examines whether we have done well or no? and such a failure will expose us to great mistakes in this case; as that we are not bound to examine the lawfulness of our work before we act, but to rush headlong upon the precipices of dubious and suspected things, and examine them afterwards at leisure. Whereas the Apostle condemns the Gentiles, especially that they knew before such and such things to be evil, and worthy of death, and yet not only did those things, but took pleasure in those that did them, *Rom. 1. 32.*

Of such a *Conscience* as this he will certainly make a proportionable improvement; For scarcely (says he) any man that says his *Conscience* is incontrollable, will say, his own Opinion or Reason is the ultimate rule of his actions. Truly I believe so, nor any man neither that says his *Conscience* is controllable, except he be out of his senses; for I would fain be informed what an ultimate rule signifies with him that pretends to speak plain English, to them that understand nothing else? I have heard of a subordinate and ultimate end: And I have heard also of a near, and a remote rule, but an ultimate rule, like that monster which was like a horse, and yet not a horse, is like sense, but in truth very non-sense.

All that we affirm of *Conscience*, as 'tis a Rule, is no more but this; That it is the next and immediate guide and director of our actions; and that the mind of God, however notified to us, is the next and immediate governour or director of *Conscience*; that as nothing can possibly intervene between the command of *Conscience*, and the will and executive power in man; so nothing can possibly interpose between the Authority of God and the *Conscience*; and both these are expressly owned by the above-mentioned learned person, Dr. S. 1. That God is the immediate Controller of *Conscience* by his Word and Will revealed to us. *Conscience* (says he) is Gods most immediate deputy, for the ordering

dering the life, and ways of men. 2. That Conscience is the immediate rule of our actions; the will of man ( says he ) should conform it self to the judgment of the practick understanding, as to its proper, and immediate Rule.

And such were once the notions of that great Man, when he is professedly pleading the cause of Conformity, which had never been waved, but that wise men are aware, the cause not to be tenable, if Conscience be not made a piece of non-sense, whose nature and office are therefore inconsiderable, because unintelligible.

But some wise men or other it seems have formed a parcel of Objections ( or else he has formed them to their hands ) which he will answer, and then suppose himself victorious.

1. Objection. *Allowing Conscience to be nothing but the mind of man, yet even so its subject to no human Laws; for as much as no man can force me to think otherwise then I do, nor compel me to be of his Opinion, in the inward sense of my mind; my mind therefore or conscience is only obnoxious to God.*

To which he replies. [ *The Answer to this is easie; for since my mind is not infallible, I may and must have something to guide my mind, and that is it which we call Law.* ]

To which I rejoyne; That this is an easie, but not a satisfactory answer. For, 1. The remedy is not proportionable to the distaste; for if the reason why my mind must have something else to guide it, be, because the mind is not infallible; the same Reason will inform us to have recourse to a better guide than that which he calls Law, because human laws are not infallible: It will mend the matter but sorrily to take me off from one fallible guide, and send me to another. 2. Since the mind of man is thus fallible, and there is a necessity that it have something else to guide it in its determinations. God has provided an infallible directory in his Word, in all things concerning his immediate Worship, and that is it which we call the Law of God.

3. But if the mind of man be fallible in its Directions, as well as human Laws, it's safer to be guided by that which God has made my next director though fallible, than by that which being also fallible, he has not made so. God has constituted Conscience the next and immediate counsellour to my will, the next and immediate deputy under himself, and therefore to err with human Canon, against the voice of Conscience, is to despise and condemn the Authority of God, in whose name it speaks; whereas to err with my Conscience, against an human Decree, is but a part

of that frailty, to which all imperfect creatures are obnoxious. 4 Nor is it universally true what he says, that the Law ( of man ) *morally obliges ( to follow its Directions ) that is, it will be my sin if I do not ;* for if my sin if I do obey in some cases, as well my sin if I do not in other. ; at least the Apostles were of this opinion, *Act. 4. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than God, judge ye.* Whatever inconveniences therefore shall arise from an absolute resignation either to the laws of men, or to our own minds directed by natural light we have the infallible Word of God, which is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths, for the guidance of our particular actions.

2. Object. But we are bound to obey the dictates of our mind or conscience, before any Law or Command of any human Authority, if they happen to interfere.

He replies, *It's true in things notoriously and plainly evil. — But where those (the Law of God or Reason ) are silent, there the Law of the Magistrate is the immediate Rule of my Conscience, and then to contradict that, is to affront the publick Tribunal with a private Consistory, &c.*

To which I rejoin. §. 1. That he has given away his whole cause by this one Concession. That a higher Law of God or Reason may make a nullity in the Law of the Magistrate ; for if Reason in any case may make such a nullity, it must either be the publick or the private Reason ; if the former, then it amounts to no more than this goodly maxim, that the the Magistrates Reason may make a nullity in his law ; but if it be the latter, that private Reason may make such a nullity, then Conscience guided and directed by that Reason, cannot transgress the Law, because Reason has already disannulled it, as to that particular Person : And if it be said, that it's only in things notoriously evil, that Reason has this sovereignty to make a nullity in the Law ; it's easily answered, that whatever my Reason judges evil, is notoriously evil as to me, for I have no way to make out the notority of the evil of a thing, but my Reason informing it self from Gods Word.

§ 2. We are bound to obey the Dictates of our own Consciences, in not acting against them in those things which only appear notoriously evil ; and God himself has tyed up Conscience from taking one step under those apprehensions, *Rom. 14. 14. To him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean.* And the Reasons are very evident. 1. Because, *Bonum oritur ex integris, malum è quolibet defectu.* The want of that single circum-



Circumstance of the satisfaction of my Judgment that it is Lawful makes the action sin. 2. He that has a prepared mind to act contrary to what he takes to be the Law of God, would act accordingly, if it really were the Law of God. As he that dares to strike a private Person, whom he takes for a Magistrate, would no doubt have struck him though he had been a Magistrate: Every man takes the voice of Conscience to be the voice of God, and he that will disobey that Dictate which he supposes the voice of God, will disobey that dictate which really proves to be his voice.

3. The goodness or evil of an action, is much estimated by the will of the Doer. He that judges an action evil, and yet will do it; God sees that though the thing was not evil, yet he had an evil will. The Action was not materially evil, but it was so interpretative. I must once more quote the same Learned person: If a Man (says he) be fully persuaded in his Conscience, that a thing is unlawful, which yet in truth is not so, the thing by him so judged unlawful cannot be done without sin. Even an Erroneous Conscience bindeth thus far, that a Man cannot go against it and be guiltless; because his practise should then run cross to his judgment, and so the thing could not be done in faith: for if his reason judge the thing to be evil, and yet he will do it, it argueth manifestly, that he hath a will to do evil, and so becometh a Transgressor of Gods General Law, which bindeth all men to Eschew all evil.

§ 3. Nor is this to affront the publick Tribunal with a private Consistory, nor set up my own opinion against Gods institution: for it's Gods own institution; Rom. 14. 5. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

3. Objection. But if after all my Consideration of the Reason of publick Laws, I cannot satisfy my self of the Lawfulness of the thing Commanded, I must then Govern my self by my Conscience, and not by the Law.

He replies. If the unlawfulness of the thing commanded is not as plain, and visible, as the Command of God for obeying Authority, my opinion, or Conscience, will be no excuse to me; Because I forsake a Certain Rule, to follow an uncertain.

To which I Rejoin: That he has made a very unequal comparison: viz. Between the unlawfulness of the particular thing; and the general command of obeying: whereas the comparison ought to have been between; either Gods General command not to act against my Conscience: and his General command to obey Authority;  
or

or else between the unlawfulness of that particular action, and Gods command to obey in that particular: It is plain in the General, that I ought to obey Authority. And it's as plain in the General; that I ought not to sin against the dictate of my Conscience. It may be doubtful, and not so plain, that this particular action is sinful; but then it's doubtful, and no more plain, that in this case 'tis my duty to obey, compare the General Law of obeying the Laws, with the general Law of not sinning against my Conscience, and its much more plain, visible, or what he pleases, that I ought not to sin against my Conscience, than that I ought to obey the Laws of Humane appointment; for that I ought to obey the latter admits of many exceptions, but that I ought not to act against the former admits of none. And if Conscience may deceive me in a particular instance; so also may the Law deceive me in the particular command.

This will more evidently appear, if we take the Reverse of the case, thus: If the Lawfulness of the thing commanded by the Law, be not as plain and visible as the Command of God not to act against Conscience, no Command of the Magistrate will excuse me, because I forsake a certain Rule, to follow an uncertain.

God commands me to Obey Authority, the same God commands me not to sin against my Light. In some cases I am not bound to Obey Authority; but in no case am I allow'd to act against my Light: It's very clear that the Magistrate has a power to command, but not so clear that he has a power to determine things indifferent, and make these determinations the conditions of my enjoying the means of Salvation: But it's very certain, that *Conscientia erronea ligat, licet non obligat*, An erroneous Conscience though it oblige me not to act against what God has made a Duty; yet it binds me up from ever acting against its Convictions: And therefore it's safest to adhere to the clearer side, and not to act against the Decision of Conscience, in compliance with a Command which it's uncertain whether it oblige or no.

And in a word, if this way of our Enquirers Reasoning be solid; Then it will not excuse a Protestant from sin, who refuses to bow before an Image when the Magistrate commands it; Because it's plain in the general, that we ought to obey Authority, but not so plain that it's sinful to bow before an Image, if things disputable be less plain than indisputable.

4. Objection: But if after all endeavours of satisfying my self

to Obey the Humane Law, yet the thing commanded by the Magistrat (however innocent in it self) seems to be as plainly unlawful, as Obedience is plainly a duty? What now?

He replies, 'this case is pityable, and will make some abatement of the sin of Disobedience, but it doth not totally excuse it, much less make it a nullity in the Law.

To which I Rejoyn. That he has now made a very noddy of his Objector. That can suppose the thing commanded *innocent in it self*, and yet to seem to him as plainly unlawful as Obedience is a Duty: But to the thing. 1. He has put the thing very unfaithfully: For we suppose the things controverted, though Lawful in their *abstracted natures*, (and what actions are not so?) yet to be *really unlawful in their use*, upon a just ballancing of all Circumstances: For we conceive many things *Lawful out of Worship*, which in Worship are *not so*: Many things Lawful when used *without offence*, which are otherwise when they *give offence to the weak*: Many things Lawful when *Conscience is satisfied*, which are not so under its *real disatisfactions*; many things *Lawful to be used*, under the power of which it is *sinful to be brought*: 2. We say not that Conscience makes a nullity in the Law, but that under present Circumstances it will not suffer us to act: But if we had so, we might, perhaps, have drunk in the Delusion from his own words so lately quoted. 'Some higher Law of God, or Reason, by which my Conscience is guided, hath in that case made a nullity in the Law of the Magistrate. 3. His Reason. Because *sin is a Transgression of the Law*. Applied to the Law of God is true; but when applied to the Law of Man, is not of universal Truth: For neither is the transgression of a Humane Law *always a sin*: Nor at any time is it the *formal Reason of sin*, but because such transgression of the Humane Law transgresses some particular Law of God, or at least that General Law, to obey where we ought to do.

(2. His second Enquiry is, *What is a tender Conscience?* And here that nothing Sacred might escape the petulancy of Priviledged Drollery, he is in a Rapture of facetiousness, and makes fine sport with poor *Tender Conscience*.

When *Josiah*, that great Pattern of all Royal Virtues, the great instance of ripe Grace in green years, had heard the Book of the Law read, with those dreadful comminations thundred out against prevarication in that Holy Law, and  
had

had duly considered how his People had incurred *the menaces* by violating *the precepts* thereof, he *rent his cloaths*, and went to Enquire of the Lord: Who gives him this Answer: 'Because thy Heart was Tender, and thou hast humbled thy self, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord, 2 Kings 22. 19.

Wisdom it self hath taught us: That the man is happy that feareth always; but he that hardens himself, shall fall into mischief, Prov. 28. 14. They that know the World is thick sown with snares, and those snares baited with suitable Temptations, will see Reason to walk very cautelously towards the World, and to maintain a Godly Jealousie over themselves, lest they be surprized with the deceitfulness of sin: But there are a daring sort of Jolly Adventurers, that fear no Colours; that will come up to the mouth of a Canon, that neither regard Gods threatnings, or warnings, the Devils stratagems, or the Ambuscadoes of the flesh, but being Fool-hardy, make a mock of sin, and all preciseness about it; who think it a piece of Gallantry to dance on the brink of that præcipice, that hangs over the bottomless pit, and can find no sifter essays of their Valour and Skill, than how to come within a hairs-breadth of Hell, and yet not tumble in. And these are the Men that fall into mischief.

This tenderness of heart being of so great price in the sight of God, we must expect it will not escape long the severe lashes of virulent spirits; but it will be difficult to persecute a thing so innocent before it be exposed, and therefore they advise themselves from Amnon's Example, who first *desiled*, and then *reviled* his Sister Tamar.

'A Tender Conscience (saith this Compassionate Enquirer) is nothing but either an ignorant or uninstructed mind, or a sickly, melancholy, and superstitious understanding. Which he might more conscisely have described without this vast expence of words. A tender Consciented Person is one that hath a soft place in's Head: or had he but spoke in plain English, as he did in the definition of Conscience. He is a most profound Coxcomb.

They who Preach this Doctrine to the World, might with the same labour, and almost equal honesty Preach God out of the World: For whoever would dethrone God from the heart, discovers but an impotent Ambition to pluck him down from his

Throne in Heaven: But when they have run through all their vain methods to excuse his Sovereignty, God will maintain to himself an Authority in the Conscience.

Nay this will destroy the *Magistrates Power* also in a while, for whose sake the Contrivance is pretended; for when Subjects are once instructed so far to debauch Conscience, that though we judge an Action sinful, yet we may do it, it will lead to this easy inference, that though we judge the Magistrates Commands Lawful yet we may disobey them: for as we say, when men have got a hole in their hearts, one concern will drop through after another without regret.

When the *Italians* would call any one *Fool* with an *Emphasis*, they say, *He is a Christian!* Hence forwards when the Devil shames his modest Servants from Cowardise in sinning, he has a nick-name for them, these are your *men of tender Consciences!* And that which has been a *Holy Engine* of Gods wisdom to secure from sin, shall now become the *Devils Machine* to flesh raw Novices in it.

That a *tender Conscience* is a *good Conscience*, has been hitherto presumed by all our Divines; and I never met with a Collect in the Liturgy of any Church that taught us to pray, *from the great Plague of a tender Conscience, Good Lord deliver us;* which yet if it be so great a Judgment, we may presume they would have done. But the *Enquirer* is of another judgment, and perhaps may proselite us with his Reasons.

1. Reason. 'Tenderneſs cannot be taken in the ſame Latitude \*with a good Conſcience, every good man has ſuch a tenderneſs \*as to be afraid of ſin, and to decline the occasions of it: If this Argument has any ſtrength in it, it muſt be becauſe every good man is a Fool. But why I pray cannot a good, and a tender Conſcience meet in every good man! Oh the Reason is this, \* It would be too arrogant and preſumptuous for thoſe \* that plead the tenderneſs of their Conſciences to ſuppoſe themſelves the only men that make Conſcience of what they do. But if a *tender Conſcience* be a *good Conſcience*, it will be nevertheleſs good, becauſe ſome unjuſtly pretend to it, or others unjuſtly revile it. Diſſenters do not ſuppoſe themſelves the only men that make a Conſcience of what they do; It ſuffices them to enjoy the peace of their own without daring to judge other mens Conſciences.

2. Reason

2. Reason: 'Because (*says he*) Then the contrary to it must be a brawny Conscience. Well! what hurt is there in that; *Soft and hard; tender and callous; sensible and brawny*, have been opposed before this Dispute began: *A heart of stone* is opposed to *a heart of flesh*; and would it not be a way of Reasoning well becoming a Rhetorician, to argue, *a heart of flesh* cannot possibly be *a good heart*, the contrary to it then will be *a stony heart*. The whole Argument stands thus: If a tender Conscience be a good Conscience, then the contrary to it must be a brawny or hard Conscience; now assume. But a brawny or hard Conscience cannot be contrary to a tender Conscience, ergo. &c. He that has nothing else to do with his time, let him abuse it in answering such Syllogisms.

Ay! 'but (*says he*) this would be too contumelious to reproach all men but themselves with: very admirable! As if the notions of words, or things were to be taken from mens rash applications of them to themselves or others. *A tender Conscience would be a good Conscience*, though the Enquirer had the confidence to Monopolize all *Tenderness to himself*: And a brawny Conscience will be an evil one, though he should be so *contumelious* as to asperse all others but himself with it.

This way of arguing is a shoe that will fit any mans foot, serve any mans occasions, as well as the owners.

A *Tender Conscience* cannot be an *ignorant mind*, for it would be too presumptuous and arrogant for those that reproach it to account themselves the only wise men on earth: And then the contrary to it must be an *enlightned mind*; and it would be too contumelious to reproach all the World for Fools but their own precious selves.

Use is the grand Master of words: He that will speak as others speak, must either understand as they do, or be content to be misunderstood: A tender Conscience amongst us of the Populace, is Conscience under that Office of warning us of the danger of sin; it Advises us to take the safer side in things dubious, and rather avoid the *snoak* for fear of the fire, than with *Empedocles*, rush into the *snoak* and find our ruine.

But the best of our Entertainment is yet behind: for he will now read a very *Learned Lecture* to this *Tender Conscience*: which in my weak judgment is monstrously absurd, seeing he supposes his *Auditors to be all Fools, Men of Ignorant minds, or sick*.

*ly understandings*: The business lyes here, how a tender Conscience must be qualified, that it may enjoy its *Priviledges*?

§. 1. 'He that pleads for compassion upon the account of his 'weakness (*that is his tenderness*) must be so ingenious as to submit himself to instruction: And if the *Enquirer* must be the *Instructor*, He deserves to wear a *Fools Coat* for his pains. for I would gladly learn that as the *first Lecture*; what is the nice and critical difference between a *Tender* and a *Compassionate Enquirer*?

There are two points they say of Wisdom, the *first*, that we are able to *advise our selves*: the *second*, that being conscious of our own inability, we be willing to submit to the advice of others wiser than our selves: But this tender Conscience being such a widgeon, it cannot be expected he should be guilty of such an Ingenuity.

§. 2. 'He that pretends to tenderness of Conscience, must 'make good his claim by being uniformly Consciencious. The plain meaning whereof is this: That he who pretpends to be a Fool, must equally maintain the Humour, and carry on the Allegory of folly all the days of his life; *otherwise* (as he wisely observes) *it will be but Pharisaism*!

To prove which deep point, he instances in *David*; 'whose 'Heart smote him when he cut off the Skirt of *Sauls* Garment, 'but it would never have been called Tenderness of Conscience 'in *David*, if at another time he should have attempted the life 'of *Saul*. And what he says is very true, if we take *Tenderness of Conscience* in its true and proper acceptation; but nothing more *Ridiculous*, nay, more *dangerous*, should we according to his New Notion, take a *tender Conscience* for a *weak understanding*.

I ask, Did *David's* heart smite him when he cut off *Saul's* Carment? Yes! But was it *out of Tenderness of Conscience* that it smote him? why yes! The *Enquirer* has just now told you so, are you deaf? Ay! But is a *Tender Conscience* nothing but an ignorant or uninstructed mind, a sick, melancholy, or superstitious understanding? why should you be so importunate: it can be nothing else: The *Enquirer* has defined it so in plain *English*. Why then this is in plain *English* the Doctrine under which his Auditors must be prepared for their Priviledges, That *David* being a *Tender hearted*, that is, a *Tender headed* Person, though the *Tender-*



ness that is, the *slenderness* of his crazed intellectuals, coming under the distinct consideration of Reflecting upon his own action, in a melancholy and superstitious qualm, rebuked himself for cutting off the Skirt of Sauls Garment.

But by his good favour this is too severe a Censure of that Holy Act of David, whose Tender Conscience (after some surprisal) being recovered, and awakened, severely schooled him that he durst make so neer an approach to the *Destroying*, by the touching of the Lords Anointed. But such glosses he might find in some old pair of Bandaleers. *Priscæ vestigia fraudis.*

Thus the Jews out of Ignorance Crucified Christ, *Acts*, 3. 17. But when Conscience was well informed, and sprinkled with that Blood which they had once shed; when Grace had applied that to their Hearts, which they rashly imprecated upon their Heads, they were pricked in their Consciences, and cryed out, *Men and Bretheren, what shall we do?* It was Ignorance that lead to that Murder, but a Conscience made tender, and reflecting upon their own act, which caused them to *Repent of, and turn from their sin.* The Rule indeed is a most-excellent one in it self, though wickedly applied in this particular; He that claims the Priviledges of a tender Conscience, must make good his claim by being uniformly Consciencious. For he that is Tender of eating a black-pudding, and yet not tender of the Blood of the Saints: He that scruples the Omission of a ceremony, though his weak Brother perish by it, yet never scruples to bear false witness, nor to murder the Reputation of another; he that is tender of the ceremonial Law of Man, and yet makes noe bones of the Moral Law of God, must not be allowed to plead this Priviledge: Though any one may be allowed the Priviledge of our Authors tender Conscience, which is only this: That if he holds any Land in Capite, he shall be begg'd for a Fool.

§. 3. 'He that is truly Tender, if he cannot do all that is commanded, yet will he do all he can. He that cannot bow at the Name of Jesus, yet perhaps can stand up at the Creed. But what now if this instance of his tenderness be impertinent? I question whether bowing at the Name of Jesus be commanded! However Dissenters are excused by this Reason from conforming to what they can, unless it be matter of their Ambition to be admitted in the Gildedge of all Fools.

To do all we can to no purpose, is small encouragement to the attempt: we are denied Communion with the Church in all Ordina-

*nauces*, unless we come up to *all the Terms of Communion*. Now since it's our apparent duty to live in the practice of *all Christs Institutions*, If we cannot enjoy them in one place upon Christs Terms, his Command, and tenderness to our own Souls oblige us to seek out, where we may enjoy them better cheap.

§. 4. 'He that cannot perform all that the Laws require of him, may forbear judging them that do, the man of a Tender Conscience finds it enough to judge his own actions. This is a most excellent Rule; and Dissenters desire no more liberty. Let them but judge of their own actions, and they leave all others *to stand, or fall to their own Masters*. And it seems hard, if they may not be indulged this Priviledge, since the silliest Creature that ever was is presumed to have so much wit, as to come out of a *showre of Rain*, rather than *to be wet to the skin*.

§. 5. *The truly tender Conscience* (that is, *the Fool* all this while) *will freely part with money, nay, of all the Men in the World there's none so free as he, for a Fool and his money are soon parted*. Well! But if he cannot conform to the Laws, he can pay the Penalty. I promise you that's a great Question, whether he can or no. *Where nothing is to be had, the King must lose his Right*. But if this be the grand qualification of a tender Conscience to be made a begger, I wonder what his Priviledge can be, unless it be to succeed old *Clause*, the King of Beggars.

For his satisfaction, if the Penalty be moderate, such as I can pay without ruin to my self and Family, though I be not satisfied in the justice of it, yet herein I may Lawfully depart from my own Right, and shall esteem it a great mercy if my coyn may compound for my Conscience.

(3.) Readers, you have heard *the qualifications of a Tender Conscience*, be but now Masters of so much Patience as to sit out the *Priviledges*; and that last Scene will make you ample satisfaction.

(1.) 'Every private Christian is bound in charity and compassion towards such a Man, to deny himself of some part of his liberty to gain him; that is, in those things that are matter of no Law: where you have first a Bit, and then a knock; or the fair Concession, and the wary revocation.

§ 1. *The Concession*; 'Every private Christian is bound in Charity to such a Man, to part with some of his liberty to gain him:

him : wherein there are several things to be advised upon. 1. The Subject of the Proposition. *Every private Person.* 2. The Nature of the Obligation. *Bound in charity and compassion.* 3. The Matter of the duty, *to deny himself of some part of his liberty.* 4. The end to gain him. In few or none of which particulars can I arrive at any clear satisfaction.

(1.) *Every private Person.* And are not all *publick Persons* bound by the Law of God to *walk charitably*? not to *destroy Souls*? I doubt we forget that God is here the Legistatour, *with whom is no respect of Persons.* Charity is the fulfilling of the Moral Law : And if any Person be so publick as not to be obliged by it, we must leave those Commands, *Thou shalt do no Murther; Thou shalt not commit Adultery* to exercise the *small fry*, and hamper the vulgar.

The Apostle Paul was a *Publick Person*, and one as well qualified to discern, and impose things indifferent, as any that have made the fairest pretences that way, and yet he professes with more than ordinary fervency. 1 Cor. 8- 13. *'That he would eat no flesh whilest the world stands, lest he should make his Brother to offend.* And who shall venture to make that the matter of an *Ecclesiastical Canon*, which the Apostle durst not venture to practise? They that assume a *greater Authority*, had need give greater proof of *greater Charity*. And yet greater was the importance of *Flesh* to the health and life of Paul, than a *ceremony* can possibly be to the peace of the Church, For, 1. *Flesh* is *Disjunctively* necessary to the health, and life of Man, that is, either flesh or some other food ; but neither this, nor that, *humane ceremony* is necessary, either to the glory of God, the peace of the Church, or Decency, and order in the worship. The Church has served God decently, lived peaceably, and glorified God eminently without them, and in his time may do so again. 2. *Flesh* was a thing perfectly *indifferent in it self*, and owned so by all that were well instructed in their Manumission from the Mosaical servitude; but the more we are faithfully instructed in the Doctrine of Christian Liberty, the more we are satisfied, that we are at liberty from all other ceremonies of men, as well as from those that were once of Divine Institution.

(2) *Bound in compassion and, Charity.* I am not well satisfied that a *Debt of meer compassion, or free Charity* is all we owe our Brother

Brother in this case. However, we owe our God a Debt of Justice; Its he that says, *Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ dyed.* Rom. 14 15, And that there is no comparison between the Law that *enjoins Ceremonies*, and that Law that commands us *not to offend our Brother*, I thus prove: 1. The Law that *forbids scandal*, is *Negative*; but the Law that commands Ceremonies, is but *affirmative*. Now Gods own affirmative precepts may have their *outward acts* suspended in some cases for sometime, but *Negatives* admit of no relaxation; He that says *thou shalt not do*, says, *thou shalt never do*; unless dispensed with by a power equal to his that gave the Prohibition. 2. The command of *not scandalizing* is purely *moral*, the heart, and life of the sixth commandment; for he that says *thou shalt not kill*, primarily intends I shall not *destroy the Soul*: but the command of ceremonies, is but *positive*; And *positives* ought to give place to *Morals*. If there be any Truth in that Doctrine of the *Enquirers*: That God lays little stress upon *circumstantials*: that his own *positive Laws* give place to the *Moral Law*: much more ought *Mans ceremonial Law* give place to Gods *Moral Law*: *Thou shalt not kill*. 3. The command of not giving offence, because *Moral*, is therefore *perpetual*, but the command of ceremonies is *Temporary*, and may be momentary, for the Church of England 34. Art. Asserts a power in every National Church, *not only to ordain, but to change, and abolish ceremonies*. 4. The command of *not scandalizing the weak, not destroying the souls* is in *Materia Necessaria*, the thing it self is good in it self, and for it self, though no positive command had interposed in the case; but ceremonies have no other goodness, but what is breath'd in them by the breath of Man, which if it were measured by the good effect, would be found very little. 5. The Command *not to offend*, is unquestionably *obligatory*, but that Command for Ceremonies is at best questionable whether it be so much as lawful. 6. The Command to avoide offence, has a direct and natural tendency to beget and preserve Amity and Unity amongst Christians; but the Command of Ceremonies apparently has occasion'd Divisions between Protestants, and Papists, between Protestants themselves, between those of the same Nations, and all Humane Terms of Church-communion necessarily produce the same bitter fruit. 7. The power of ordering the smallest matter in the Church, must conform to the Sovereign end of edification

cation. 2 Cor. 13. 10. *The Power which the Lord hath given me for edification, and not destruction*; But no power may suspend my duty of pleasing my Brother to his edification. 8. Supposing the worst: That it's only *a debt of Charity* which my Brother may challenge of me, not to scandalize him; and *a Debt of Justice* to Obey the Magistrate in this case, yet the *Minims of Justice* ought to yield to the *Magnalia of Charity*: As the *Command of a Father*, in lower instances, ought to yeeld to the preservation of my *Neighbours life*.

(3) Some would except against the matter of his concession: (to deny himself in some part of his Liberty) what a small some that may be none knows: perhaps there is no part of his Liberty, which that duty may not Command.

(4) I except lastly against his propounded end: *to please and gain him*: as not adequate to that which the Command has in its eye.

To Scandalize, or give Offence, may be taken either in a primary sense, and so it denotes *a culpable giving occasion to a Brother to sin*, or in a lower or secondary sense, for the *angering, and displeasing of a Brother*. This distinction well observed would unravel much confusion, which peeters our discourses.

1. If we compare the displeasing of a *private person*, with that of a *publick*, the latter is more *sinful*, and much more *dangerous*, for the *wrath of a King is like the roaring of a Lion*.

2. To occasion culpably a *publick person* to sin, is more heinous, than to occasion the sin of a *private Person*, because the sins of those in eminent places have such a fatal influence upon the peoples *pollution*, and the procurement of Gods displeasure.

3. But if we compare a scandal in the *primary* sense, with one in the *secondary*, then it's no measuring cast, whether it be more eligible to *displease* the one, or *destroy* the other: Nor can there be *sin in displeasing* one, when I cannot otherwise please, but by *destroying* the other: for though my own folly may possibly so ensnare me; yet God never puts me under such Circumstances, that I shall be necessitated to sin.

§. 2. You have heard his fair *concession*, now take his *Limitation* along with you: 'That is (says he) in those things that are matters of no Law, but left free, and undeterminate, there the Rule of the Apostle takes place, Rom. 15. 1, 2. We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please

‘please our selves : *And*, let every one of us please his Neighbour, for his good to edification, *And we will add.* Rom. 14. 13. ‘Let no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in ‘his Brothers way. v. 15. Destroy not him with thy meat for ‘whom Christ dyed. v. 19. Let us follow after the things ‘which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify ‘another. v. 20 For meat Destroy not the work of God.

This is the last retreat of these Gentlemen: hither they retire as to their *Triarist*, and strong reserves. You ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, to edify him heavenwards, not to murder his soul, till a Law be made to the contrary, you are bound in Charity, and compassion to such a one, till you receive further Orders, and then you must be *savage and barbarous*: But his Reasons follow.

1. Reason: because *we may not do evil that good may come*: The sinews of which Reason lye in a supposition: that to omit a Ceremony, is an evil thing, compared with the saving of a Soul. This General Rule may be applyed that other way: we must not do evil that good may come, and therefore may not draw a poor Brother into sin, that some good may come by it; and the rather, if we consider what good comes by it. As the saving my self a pecuniary mulct; or Recognizing the Magistrates power to command; which may be done, and is so in many ways, wherein the scandal of another is not concern’d; and if I should transgress a Ceremony, or so, for the saving of a soul, we may Lawfully presume upon the general will of the Legislator, that no positive Command of his should be so rigorously insisted on, when it would destroy a greater good.

2. Reason: *We must not break the Laws of God or man out of an humour of complaisance to a Brother*: Ans: To discharge a weighty duty, to avoid the scandalizing of a Brother, to walk charitably: which the Enquirer p. 137. (when he had occasion to magnifie charity) tells us is an essential part of Religion: ought not to be put off with a frothy Droll, as if it were nothing but the humour of Complaisance.

The Apostle whose head understood the speculation, and whose heart entertained the love of this Doctrine much better than himself, has taught us other things: That to sin against the Bretheren, is to sin against Christ, 1 Cor. 8. 12 ‘Tis to destroy with our meats (indifferent things) him for whom Christ dyed. Rom.

Rom. 14. 13. And if these be matters of *humour*, and *complaisance*, and we should venture a ceremony for them, it would be but to stake one complement against another.

3. Reason: 'In those times (*says he*) the Magistrate being Pagan, took no care of the Church, nor had passed any Laws concerning the management of the Christian Religion: And so Christians had a great deal of scope, and room for mutual condescension. But the case is quite otherwise when there's a Law in being, &c.

Really, the Pagan Magistrate was very much overseen, unless perhaps he knew nothing less or more of his Authority over things indifferent; and then the Apostles must needs be to blame, who never inform'd him of that power over the Church, wherewith Christ had entrusted him! And above all *St. Paul* was utterly unexcusable, having so inviting an opportunity to do it in: Being so long at *Rome*, having friends in *Cæsars Household*, and this in *Quinquennio Neronis*, when the Lyon was treatable and approachable; besides this must have obliged him to entertain better thoughts of Christians, and Christianity, and engaged him to protect, and defend it, when it lay so entirely at his devot<sup>r</sup>. The *Enquirer* instructed us, p. 144 'that such a Society as a Church, could never be conserved without some Rites or other, nor any publick Worship be performed, if all ceremonies, and circumstances such as of time, place, person, and the like, be left indefinite and undetermined. He has told us since, that the power of Determining and Defining these things, lye's in our Governours who understand the Civil Policy. p. 151. And now he tells us, that in those (primitive) times the Magistrate had passed no Laws concerning the manage of the Christian Religion: so that it was impossible that either Church Government should be Lawfully administred, or publick Worship duely performed. because the Apostles were negligent in informing the Emperour of his power, or he careless in performing his duty.

I wonder that amongst all the Apocryphal Epistles of *Christ to Agobarus*, or *Paul to Seneca*, we meet with none of the Apostles to *Nero*.

'That whereas their Lord and Master had left them in great haste and either through the hurry of business had forgotten, or littleness of the things had neglected to settle his Churches; nor had passed any Laws concerning the manage of Religion,  
'for



‘for want of which polittick constitutions they were in a lamentable confusion, the worship of God lying at sixes, and sevens, the Government of the Church meer Anarchy, none had power to command, none were obliged to obey, every one did that which was right in his own eyes; none had power to impose, or compel the rest to submit to such Terms of communion as were necessary, besides *those few and plain ones* appointed by Christ himself; and forasmuch as they were altogether by the ears about indifferent things, and they had no Rules in their Law books to determine these intricate matters.

‘They do therefore humbly beseech his Imperial Majesty, that he would Review and Revise their Religion, and add such other mystical ceremonies, significant of Gospel grace, wherewith his well known Piety could not but be intimately acquainted; and that he would take speedy, and effectual care with these vexatious *Tender Consciences*, who scrupled eating of meats, because once prohibited by the Law of Moses, and straitly charge, and command that none should gratify them in their weakness; and take such other, and further order about their Religion, as he in his Royal wisdom, from time to time, and at all times hereafter should judge meet, and expedient.

*And his Petitioners shall humbly Pray, &c.*

But to satisfy that Assertion, I shall offer further these particulars.

1. It cannot appear that the Roman Emperours had any such commission as is supposed to make that *no duty*, which God had made *a duty*, To make it *no sin to give offence*, which otherwise had been *a sin*: nor to add New Terms of communion, or to shut out of the Church those whom the fundamental Laws of Christ would receive.

2. This principle of his reflects most scandalously upon the greatest Temporal Mercy which God ever vouchsafed his Churches; I mean the *Christian Magistrate*: for it implies, that the conditions of Christians was much more easy under the *Pagan*, then under the *Christian Magistrate*. ‘Then (*says he*) the Christians had a great deal of scope, and room for mutual condescension: but now they are crowded up by restrictions. Then the Worship of God was *not clogg’d* with needless ceremonies, but now it’s incumbred with New Terms of communion. I might then have releived a weak Conscience, But the  
case

case is quite otherwise (says he) now there's a Law in being. Then I might have used my liberty in indifferent things, and only be restrained by *Prudence, and Charity*, but now I am debarred of it, by the will of *Authority*: This I say is a scandalous reflection: For God has promised Christian Princes as *Nursing Fathers* to the Gospel Church, to secure and protect them, and the *Enquirer* makes them *Step Fathers*, tempting us to think, that we have got no such bargain by the change.

3. It's clear that the Apostles had as much power to order the meer circumstances of Worship, and Church government, as was needful to their exercise, and actual performance, or else all their determinations were sinful.

(2) The next privilege of this tender conscience is: *'That it becomes the Magistrate so far to consider the satisfaction of peoples minds, (as well as the safety, and peace of his Dominions) as not to make those things the matter of his Laws, which he foresees mens weakness will make them boggle at. This is his Concession: wherein he needed not have been so Timorous.* For when the Magistrate is settling the civil peace of his Dominions, he needs not concern himself, whether the people will skew, or no. But as if he had been affraid, he had conceded too far, he wisely limits the concession, *As, unless there be weighty Reasons on the other hand to counterballance that consideration; And they must be weighty Reasons indeed, that will counterballance the Edification and Salvation of weak, yet sincere, Christians; that will counterballance the peace, and safety of his Dominions; indifferent things will hardly weigh against these: But what are those ponderous things that will make the scales even against these? why? 1. Such things, which (though some scruple) are necessary to Government: yes, by all means; when things necessary to Government are put in the ballance, with the peace and safety of his Dominions, they ought to turn the beam: but this is freely granted, that if mens scruples would overturn Government, they must scruple on, at their own peril: But now we are ready to joyn issue with him upon this point. That the things scrupled are neither necessary, or any ways advantageous to the Being, well being, or Glorious being of this, or any Government: The Roman Empire was in its grearest Glory, at his highest pitch, when the Apostles baptized without the sign of the Cross, and preacht without the Holy Garment: the Christian Religion, naked,*  
and

and plain as Christ left it, had not the least evil, or malignant influence upon the peace of that Empire; Though it was the Policy of its enemies then, to clap all the Commotions that arose upon other accounts, upon the back of the Christian Doctrine; It was the popular cry: 'These are the men that have turned the world upside down. And when the judgments of God broke out upon them for their persecutions, still to clamour: *Tollite Impias: Christianos ad Leones!* Away with such Fellows, 'tis not fit they live a day! Nay its evident that many Nations have prospered both in war and peace by Land and Sea, who never knew the ceremonies and none the better for them; 2. Such things which are grateful to the greater or more considerable part of the Subjects: *Those are such things which counterballance tender Consciences* and the peace and safety of his Dominions. I suspect the Enquirer to be a raw Statesman as well as a crude Casuist: What would he have a Prince destroy one half of his Subjects to gratify the other half? The Apostle has offered a rational expedient, that the one may be gratified, and yet the other not destroyed. Romans 14. 3. 'Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not: And let him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. They to whom Ceremonies are so grateful sauce, may have their fill of them, and must they needs compel squeamish stomachs to feed on the same Dish? The gratefulness of Ceremonies to some mens fancies is no solid Reason, why a considerable though not the more considerable part, should be undone, tempted to sin, deprived of Communion in what they have a clear right by the Constitutions of the Gospel.

Nor are the measures of considerableness to be taken from outward advantages that such a one is Rich, a Dignitary, a Canon, a Prebend, a Dean, an Arch-Deacon, Chancellor, Bishop or Arch-Bishop, for he that is most inconsiderable in these respects, is too considerable to be ruined either in his temporal, or Spiritual concerns for a Ceremony.

And when all is done, it's a question whether the Ceremonies are so grateful to the greater and more considerable part? many learned and pious Ministers, many sincere and sober Christians make a rubbing thift to get them down, accounting them tolerable, though not eligible; to these they are not grateful; but as a burden of which they cannot fairly discharge themselves, may

be

be grateful; and leave but them at liberty, and it will soon be visible, that the matters of our differences are not grateful either to the greater, or more considerable part of the Nation.

(3) *It becomes the Magistrate (says he) who governs Men, not Beasts, to afford means of instruction, and competent time for those instructions to take place: I am glad however, to hear that Subjects are not Beasts, but Men: the rather, because he told us just before, That it is the duty of a good Magistrate to drive as the Cattle can go. But for answer.*

1. If there must be time afforded for instructions to take place, Then such competent time must be allowed to every generation, for New days will produce the same doubts. It was a true observation of a learned Person: that leave English Men to their English Bibles, and there will a new off-spring arise in every Age that will have the same apprehensions about these matters, that Nonconformists now have.

2. The time of these instructions, that it may be competent to work upon our minds, will be a considerable circumstance. I have read of one who being asked *What God was?* Desired a days time to consider of that important question: and when that was expired, he desired two, then four, still doubling his time, as he had doubled his diligence in his study of the Point. I am verily perswaded the more impartially, and sedulously any one shall examine the matters in Controversie, the more Reason he will find to crave more time for his satisfaction; and if he arrives not at a Plerophory that the things are *sinful*, he shall never be able to reach a full assurance that they are *Lawful*: But yet time to consider will be acceptable; As he that undertook to make an *Ass* speak, in time; thought himself pretty secure, notwithstanding the impossibility of his undertaking; because he might dye, the *Ass* dye, or his Enemies dye in the interval.

3. The means of instruction are to be considered, that apt mediums be used for conviction; for if Scripture, and plain Deductions from thence, if Reason, and the practise of the Apostolical Churches are not produced for our satisfaction, a few scraps, and shreds, old ends, and fragments, out of *Livie*, *Tacitus*, and *Cato*, will never do it. 4. And the persons who are to instruct us, are no less material. They must be equal and unbiassed persons, who are not engaged by Preferments, Dignities and great Revenues to uphold an Interest; It must not be such whose Wit and Rhetorick make a flutter in the air without Reason, that will probably convince Gainfayers, and therefore we humbly beg that he may be instructed from the Word of God, the practise of

the purest and primo Primitive times, and the instruction managed from the Writings of the first Reformers of the Church of England. Till this instruction be given, We hope, and pray that (as he expresses it) there may be a *suspension of Rigorous execution.*]

What now if after all this the people will not be instructed? (And what if after all this, and a great deal more to as little purpose, they have no Reason to alter their judgment) Why then there's no way but one with our *Enquirer*.---*I see no Obligation upon the Magistrate either to forbear to make, or execute such Laws as he apprehends for the good of his Government.* No more do I neither: only hope that he will not apprehend poenal Statutes made upon the account of Ceremonies with their execution (or rigorous execution), will be for the glory of God, the peace of the Church, or the good of his Government, though that was our Authors insinuation: And thus we have the short and the long of the *compassionate Enquirer*.

I must for a conclusion entreat the Reader to Recollect himself, and remember whereabouts his lesson is. In Part. 2. ch. 1. He had mentioned three ways for the cure of Church-Divisions. The first Toleration, the second Comprehension, but these were either impracticable, or Remedies worse than the Disease, it seems something or other was amiss in them that turned his stomach at them. At last he fixed upon a third method, and that was this of *Instruction*: under which course of Phyltick we have been disciplined all this while: strange Chimærical inconveniencies we have heard to be in separation. How very little stress God lays upon his own positive institutions: what an imaginary Name *Christian Liberty* is; what a silly Ridiculous thing a *tender Conscience* is; what a transcendent Power Christ has entrusted the Magistrate with, to make what Terms of Christian Communion he pleases, if not expressly prohibited in Gods Word. In these things we have been indoctrinated without reasonable proof, and we are, or have Reason to be as far from satisfaction as we were, and somewhat further: Well then, have amongst you my Masters!—*I can see no Obligation*—Well! It's no great matter whether you can or no! If Princes saw with your *litteral eyes*, that can see nothing but Ceremony; If they should handle Dissenters with your rough *Esaus hands*, lined with the down of *Procrispine*; did they hear with your ears which chime to the Musick of the Cathedral, I perceive it would go very hard with these poor wretches.

Many Clergy-men measure the Wisdom, Grace, Mercy, Tenderness, and Bounty of Princes to their Subjects, by their own narrow, and incapable

capable hearts ; Thus when one told *Alexander*, that his bounty was too large to bestow upon a Subject ; He answer'd, Tell not me what's meet for him to receive, but what's fit for *Alexander* to give. Princes are called *Gods*, and they then most eminently answer *their Names*, when they imitate him who commands the Sun impartially to shed abroad his beams upon the habitable world, not taking the proportions of his Goodness to his Creatures, from the malice and envy of some, or the little merits of others.

The Story of *Augustus Cæsar* is as remarkable as common. *Vedius Pollio* had once invited this Emperour to a Treat ; whilst they were in the Gallery, comes in a poor Slave, with *Death* in his face, and *Hope* in his haste, cast himself at the Emperours feet, and humbly begs, he might suffer a less cruel Death than his Patron *Pollio* had doomed him to. *Augustus* was surprized, and upon enquiry in the matter, understands that this Boy had accidentally broken some of his Masters *Chrystal Glasses*, wherein he greatly delighted, for which fact his furious Master had inhumanely condemned him to be thrown into a Pond, there to be devoured by the *Canibal Lampreys* : And this was the Reason of his so confident Application, to the grace of Sovereign Majesty. *Augustus* transported with the novelty of so Barbarous punishment, commanded the rest of the Glasses to be broken, and the Fish-pond to be filled up ; That there might either be no occasion for such passion, or not the means to execute it.

Let therefore the *Enquirer* know, who with his smooth *Prelatical Charity* has given up Dissenters to the *Rods and Axes*, that they will honour and obey the King, under all those penalties which it shall please his Wisdom to inflict ; And if they cannot be so serviceable in well-doing, will endeavour to suffer for well-doing, with a heart so submissive, and a conversation so inoffensive, that shall make their enemies more repine at the Glory of their sufferings, than the Eyesore of their indulgence.

Nor yet dare they despair of the Clemency of their Sovereign, who having suffered hard things in his own sacred person, has learnt to pity them who do suffer. But if this *Compassionate Enquiry* be all the instruction they must expect for their satisfaction, the Nonconformists may have Reason to say, they are ill fed, and worse taught.

## C H A P. IX.

*Wherein the Enquirers insinuated Detractions are refell'd, some little Artifices discovered. Calvin vindicated, and the whole concluded.*

**D**etractions differs from Contumely, just as Theft from Robbery by the Highway.

The Slanderer is but a Pick-pocket, the Reviler a Padder; the one can dexterously do the feat, and carry off his prize with a cast of cleanly conveyance, but the foulmouth'd Railer attacks the repute of the innocent *Vi & Armis*, and pleads his *commission* to plunder.

The *Serious Inquirer*, in some of his former Chapters, has with downright Obloquy assaulted the credit of Dissenters, but in this he proceeds more discreetly, undermining their Reputations by oblique insinuations and indirect suggestions: whereby he has gained this singular advantage, that whilst he lays before the Malicious sufficient matter to feed, and furnish their malice, yet lyes close under the covert of this excuse, that he affirms nothing positively, at once taking from the aggrieved party all possibility of just defence, and sheltering himself under the Politick plea of not being Dogmatical.

The design of all which (as of his whole elaborate discourse) he could not more fully instruct us in, than in those few words of his, pag. 221. *It was an effectual course Haman took, Esth. 3. 8. when he designing to ruine the whole Church of the Jews, first undermines the Reputation of their Profession, delates their Religion as not fit for the Protection of the Prince, and that it did contain Laws contrary to all people, and that they would not obey the Kings Laws. So solemn and sacred is that practise, to love the Treason, and hate the Traytor, to immedate the Policy, and yet decry the Politician. But sure our Enquirer is quite out in one thing; for though Haman's Policy was subtle, yet it proved not effectual, unless he account a pair of Gallows such great success: and therefore I hope the Enquirer will accept it as a specimen of my charity, if I pray that he may never take an effectual course; Examples indeed are numerous, and obvious, which prove that wicked counsels have most perniciously recoiled upon their Authors. And Phalaris (in this one thing*  
most



most just) taught *Perillus* the sweetness of his own *Brazen Bull*, by giving the Artificer the first *bandsale* of his ingenious contrivance.

— *Ne lex est justior ulla,  
Quam nec in Artifices arte perire sua.*

*Sect. 1.* Now his first insinuation is, that the N. C. stand out only upon a point of *Honour*.

*I cannot see* (says he) *what should be able to perpetuate our distractions, unless it be a point of Honour, that some men think themselves obliged to persevere, because they have begun : which fly Method of Detraction, as it may safely be commended by the innocent, so as easily retorted by the confident; for others perhaps cannot see what should be able to perpetuate their persecutions, unless it be a point of Honour, that some men think themselves obliged to persevere in their rigorous impositions, because they have begun, and had rather justify an error, than have it thought they have been in one so long. It's a most unrighteous procedure to charge any man with base and unworthy designs, further than pregnant overtures will justify such a charge, and yet A. B. Whiggit has given the world too great occasion for such a jealousy, that it was a point of Honour that obstructed a Reformation, when his great argument, to defeat the Pious intentions of the Parliament, was, that it would tend to the slander of the Church, as having hitherto maintained an error. Nay I have read in the Grand Debate Sect. 6. That the Reverend Prelates authorized to reform the Liturgy, insist upon this as one Reason of their non-condeiscension to more alterations : That it would be a virtual Concession, that the Liturgy was an intolerable burden to tender consciences.*

But a few considerations would rout a Legion of such ungrounded suggestions.

*As, 1.* That the applause of *inconsiderable Persons* must needs be very *inconsiderable*, and that credit *small*, which is gained amongst those who are of *small credit* in the world. And *2.* that the Temptation lyes visibly on the other side. He that would drive a gainful Trade for *Credit* and *Honour*, must settle his Factory where such commodities are native and staple : He may gape for Dignities and Honour till he is *Chap-fallen*, whose conscience shall cast his lot amongst the Dissenters; and when he has Angled all day, may come home with a Diverb, *I have fished fair, and caught a Frog.* And *3.* Sure no wise man would purchase honourable scars, with mortal wounds; nor incur the displeasure of *Armed Power*, only to wear the Cognizance of foolish valour in *Black and Blew.* 'Tis a slender alleviation of those loads of reproach which they feel, besides those greater severities which they may fear to wear

*a Feather in their Caps, and the airy plume of popular applause.* Nay. 4. let this Gentleman make it his own case, and learn to judg more moderately. Suppose it were enacted by Law ; That to *practise the Ceremonies* should be punisht with suspension *ab officio & beneficio*. would he upon a point of Honour espouse their quarrel? or would the waxen wings of Fame support his courage under those penalties? Why then should he judg that corruption to lodg in the breast of another, which he would not harbour in his own?

And yet I must needs say, that the good name, and moderate *Repute* of every *Christian*, much more of every *Minister of the Gospel*, ought to be of that value to him, as not to prostitute it to every *three-half-peny Temptation*, not to tender it cheap by Levity and Inconstancy, when no more cogent Reasons are offer'd for an alteration, than *meer will and pleasure* ; nor has any one thing more debased the honour of Christianity, nor weakned the success of the Ministry, than that some of those who wear those glorious Liveries, have either sullied them in the dirt, or turned them *wrong side outwards*, wheeling about like Weather-cocks, with the smallest breath of flattering preferments, or howeyer, with the more violent gusts of threatned persecutions.

A good man is *tested* by *God*, one of a cubical figure, that falls upon his Basis of Conscience, which way soever the Providence of God shall throw him ; though some mens practise would make us believe, that the plain *English* of that hard word is, *to fall on his legs like a Cat* : which an old hyperbolical proverb tells us, will wriggle her self into her true perpendicular. though shot out of a Cannons mouth.

Such persons, I confess, do not want their specious arguments, to prove themselves *constant*, under the greatest demonstrations of *inconstancy*. For (say they) we have settled our ultimate end, and fixed our main design, which is to assure our Revenues, our Ease, our Splendour ; and if the Terms of enjoying them vary, yet we never vary from the ecliptick line of Preferments : let contingencies appear in multiform shapes, we can press all Accidents into the service of our *unum necessarium*. Such was that Quadrangular Doctor, a zealous Protestant in Edward 6th days, a Papist in Queen Maries, and upon the advancement of Queen Elizabeth faced about, and read the Service in English : *O come let us sing a new Song !* Thus let the exterior face of Religion receive more shapes than *Proteus*, yet he abides constant to his principles, and resolves to continue *Vicar of Bray*.

Yet that we may not prove sturdy Oaks, but flexible Willows, the Enquirer has two weighty things to say to us. (1) That

(1.) That it's no real dishonour, but a manly generosity, and a Christian virtue to change our minds upon mature deliberation, and the evidence of better Reason. Very Orthodox! I hope then he will allow it to be a manly generosity, and a Christian virtue to keep our minds unchanged, to assert our own convictions, till those evidences of better Reason shall appear which may change them, and that it would be a childish pusillanimity to change our practice, till better Reason shall oblige us to change our minds: But I am fearful, though upon mature deliberation we fix our minds according to the dictates of the best Reason we can get, yet shall we not avoid trouble till we conform them to the publick Reason. But (says he) the very temper which our Saviour requires of his Disciples, and which is the great preparatory disposition to the entertainment of Christianity, especially consists in a simplicity of mind, and an indifferency to comply with whatsoever shall best recommend it self to our faculties. Well! Dissenters say they have already complied with that which has best recommended it self to their faculties, shall they be secured from vexation upon such compliance? They resolve never to be Nonconformists to their own faculties! Still I doubt that they who have invented a Publick Wisdom, a Publick Reason, a Publick conscience, will set their wits on work once more to contrive a Publick Faculty where in those Publick Powers may reside, for it's but congruous that the Publick Treasure should be deposited in a Publick Treasury.

I am all this while at a loss where our Saviour has required this same Indifferency, unless perhaps where he says, *He that will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* An indifferency of Spirit towards every thing is an excellent preparatory towards just nothing. And the best temper (it seems) to entertain the Christian Religion, is to be of no Religion. As the Eye is the better prepared to receive the species of all colours, because it's of none; and the imaginary first matter is therefore capable of all forms, because it's tinctur'd with no form.

Such has been the Policy of our Romish Emissaries, To endeavour to reduce the dissenting World to Atheism, that they might be prepared to receive the impressions of their Catholicism; and upon this Maxim was the Counsel founded their great Boverius gave to a greater Person fortified with more grace than to take it. *Ut quoniam vera Religio tibi inquirenda est, antequam ad eam investigandam accedas, omnem prius Religionem suspectam habeas, lubeatque tamliu à Protestantium Fide, & Religione animum, & voluntatem suspendere quamdiu in veri investigatione versaris.* "That seeing your Majesty is now going to search for

“ the true Religion, before you fall upon the work, you would first  
 “ suspect every Religion: and that you would be pleased so long to  
 “ suspend your assent and consent to the Faith and Religion of the  
 “ Protestant, as you are engaged in the disquisition of the Truth.

(2.) The second thing he has to say in us, is, *That the Honour of our Religion is of more value than our Personal Reputation.* Still Orthodox! but the *Honour of Religion* is very little secured by the Professors adapting themselves to that which has the vogue, and carries no other advantage but that of power to second, and back it: Christianity will shine with its own Native Beams, without sinful compliances: Nor need we fear but that Christian Magistrates will cast a benign Aspect upon the *Religious*, though the *Religion* was never of their Composure: They like it the better, because their *Saviour* made it, and not they: And how high soever God has set them above their Subjects, it's their greatest glory to stoop as low to a Redeemer, as the meanest Peasant. Christianity in its naked simplicity, and most modest attire disturbs no forms of Government, but is admirably suited by the wisdom of Christ to all modes of Civil Policy: And if we may speak according to the *best evidences of the Reason*, and own that which recommends it self to our faculties, a Monarch may be as absolute without the Ceremonies, and other unnecessary Additions, as with them.

*Self. 2.* A second insinuation is, That Nonconformists are turbulent, unperswaded, ungovernable: That their principles have a malignant influence upon Government: And for the more dextrous management of this suspicion, he tells us, *That it's a great blot in the Writings of Calvin, that after he had Discoursed rarely well of the Power of Princes, and the duty of Subjects, he undoes all again with an unhappy exception in these words: De privatis hominibus semper loquor.* I see if Calvin has but one blot, the Enquirer will hit it; so quick-sighted he is, that none must hope to take him with a *why not?* I meet indeed with an Eagle-eyed Jesuit, who to palliate the villanies of their own Society, would gladly pick a hole in Calvin's Coat; but the Reverend and Protestant Bishop Bilson roundly takes him up thus: Calvin is so well known to those that be learned and wise, for his great pains and good labours in the Church of God, that a few snarling Friars cannot impeach his good Name, though they never so wretchedly pervert his words: And yet the Bishops Book came forth *Cum Privilegio*, and was Dedicated to Q. Elizabeth, By one very tender in the point of Supremacy and Prerogative. *Dial. 1. 509.* But Calvin's greatest Crime was his Syncretism with the *Practices of the Church*, and not his enmity to the Civil Government.

And

And because a shred cut off from the whole piece of his Discourse may easily through ignorance be misconstrued, or through malice misrepresented to his prejudice, I shall present his words at large to the Reader, *Institut. Lib. 4. cap. 20. parag. 31.*

“ Nobis autem interim summoperè cavendum, ne illam plenam venerandæ Magestatis Magistratuum autoritatem, quam Deus gravissimis edictis sanxit, (Etiamsi apud indignissimos refideat, & qui eam suâ nequitia, quantum in se est polluant) spernamus, aut violamus: Neque enim, si ultio Domini, est effrenatæ dominationis correctio, ideo protinùs nobis demandatam arbitremur; quibus nullum aliud quam parendi, & patiendi, datum est Mandatum. De privatis hominibus semper loquor; Nam siqui nunc sint populares Magistratus ad moderandam Regum Libidinem constituti (quales olim erant qui Lacedæmoniis Regibus oppositi erant, Ephori; aut Romanis Consulibus, Tribuni plebis; aut Atheniensium Senatui, Demarchi; & quæ etiam fortè potestate, ut nunc res habent funguntur in singulis regnis tres Ordines, quum primarios conventus peragunt) adeo illos, ferocienti Regum Licentiæ pro officio intercedere non veto; ut sui, Regibus impotenter grassantibus, & humili plebeculæ insultantibus, conniveant, eorum dissimulationem nefariâ perfidiâ non carere, affirmem; quia populi Libertatem cujus se Dei ordinatione tutores positos, norunt, fraudulenter produnt.

I think we may safely venture to translate them: “ In the mean while we ought studiously to beware that we neither despise nor oppose the Authority of Magistrates, so full of Dread and Majesty, which God himself hath established by most severe Decrees, (although possibly it should reside in Persons most unworthy; and such as by their personal wickedness do defile it, as much as in them lyes.) For though the Divine vengeance be the Restrainer of unbridled Empire, yet must we not thence imagin that the Management thereof is committed to us. I speak always of private persons: For if there should be any such popular Magistrates constituted to moderate the Arbitrariness of Princes, (such as of old were the Ephori, who balanced the Lacedæmonian Kings. The Tribunes of the People, who moderated the Roman Consuls; or the Demarchi, who were the same to the Senate of Athens: And which power (as things go now) the three Estates in each Kingdom, when they are Convened in full Parliament, do peradventure enjoy, I am so far from forbidding them to intercede according to their duty, with the furious Licentiousness of Kings, that if they shall connive at

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“ them when they passionately harrass, and trample upon the poor  
 “ Commonalty, I may affirm that their silence cannot be excused of  
 “ sinful breach of Trust, seeing they falsly betray the Peoples Liberty,  
 “ whereof they knew themselves to be Guardians by Gods In-  
 “ stitution.

Reader! These are those dismal lines which have raised the clamour against poor *calvin*, wherein thou wilt observe these particulars.

1. That *private persons* have no warrant from God to restrain the exorbitances of Governours, but are left to the only Remedy *parendi, & patiendi*, of submission and patience.

2. Yet he supposes that some Magistrates may possibly have a larger power than *bare suffering, or passive obedience*.

3. This power which he supposes may possibly be intrusted with them, is but *ferientis Regum licentia pro officio intercedere*: dutifully to intercede with the Prince to redress grievances, humbly to represent the Invasions made upon propriety, or perhaps (if called) to Counsel and Advise a Redress: which is a power far greater than that of bare suffering, and enduring the evil, and yet infinitely short of Rebellion against Deposing, Banishing, or Murdering Princes.

4. This is only upon a supposition that there be such Persons so qualified, and intrusted by the constitution of the Government, and known Laws of the Land, *Si qui sint populares Magistratus constituti*. Such he supposes indeed the *Ephori* at *Lacedamon*, the *Tribunes* at *Rome*, the *Demarchi* at *Athens* to have been; but he's not sure, 'tis but a peradventure, there were any such in his time, *quâ etiam fortè protestate (ut nunc res habent) funguntur in singulis Regnis tres ordines*. For he knew pretty well how their own little Commonwealth at *Geneva* was Governed, but the Models of *France*, *Spain*, and other Sovereign Monarchies he had but a guess at; he had heard, perhaps, of *Les Etats Generaux* in *France*, but he was not very certain whether he had any such *interceding Authority* or no; however or whatsoever it was, it could not be exerted but in full Convention of the Estates in a General Diet. *Cum primarios conventus peragunt*, and then was the time to Petition, to make Addresses in a submissive way for the redress of grievances.

And 5. the guilt he charges upon these popular Magistrates for betraying their trust, arises from this alone, that they *connived at the miserable harrassings of the Commonalty*, they took no notice at all of the Invasions upon the Subjects Rights and Proprieties: which they might

might have done, and never have mingled Heaven and Earth together with Civil broils. And what can an ordinary Eye espy hence, that should justify the Enquirers outcry, *A passage (says he) of that ill Aspect upon Government, that it is suspected by some, and not altogether without cause, that most of the confusions of Kingdoms, that have happen'd since, and especially the troubles of this Nation, have received encouragement, if not taken rise from hence.*

If this Enquirer (or any other) has formerly contributed to the confusions and troubles of this, or any other Nation, and received encouragement from this place of *Calvin*, he ought first to be deeply humbled before God, that he should draw such desperate conclusions as those of Rebellion out of an innocent sentence, and give more essential proofs, and signal marks of Repentance, than accepting a Benefice of three or four hundred *per Annum*: and secondly, be ashamed that he ventured to read *Calvin*, before he could well construe a piece of plain *Latin*, for I cannot understand that *Calvin*, though he was bound to write true *Latin*, was also bound to help every one to a construing book; no, nor God obliged to prevent all the evil consequences which an evil heart and base lusts might draw out of the most inoffensive expressions.

He that will give scope to suspicions, may easily conjecture where the Enquirer might drink in those principles which have such an ill aspect upon Government; he needed not have travelled to the *Lake Lemane*; his own incomparable *Hugo* could have furnished him with *Maxims* of that Tendency: *Ignatius Loyola* himself might have been Scholar to such a Master: I shall refer the Reader only to his famous piece de *Fure Belli, & Pacis*. Lib. 1. cap. 4. Sect. 7. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. A place containing many passages of that ill aspect upon Government, that it's suspected by some, and upon good grounds that most of the Civil Wars which have happen'd since in Europe, have received encouragement, if not taken rise from thence: Let him try if he can find in *Calvin*, such a passage as this: *Potest Rex etiam suam Imperii partem amittere*: or this: *Regi in partem non suam involanti, vis justa opponi potest*. Or this other: *Qui Principes sub populo sunt, sive ab initio talem acceperunt potestatem, sive postea ita convenit, ut Lacedaemone, si peccent in Leges, ac Republicam, non tantum vi repelli possunt, sed si opus sit, morte puniri*. But I shall spare Loyal Ears, and only leave this Caution, *Quiescat porro moneo, & desinat Lacescere, malefacta ne noscat sua*.

I had almost forgot his creaking triumph, what glorious exploits he has atchieved in his former Adventures: But the Author of the Ecclesiastical



*fiastical Polity* will doubtless be as civil to him, as he was to the Author of the *Friendly Debate* (not that between Sir Satan and Master *Sherlock*) and take some handsome occasion to claw him with a Congratulatory Epistle, and rejoyce with him in his great successes. *Having* (says he) *as I think* (that was an useful and modest Parenthesis) *demonstrated the sin and mischiefs of Separation, and evacuated all the Excuses and palliations of it from the plea of Ckristian Liberty, and pretence of tender Conscience, I cannot see what should remain able to perpetuate our Distractions, &c.* Wherein I can thus far agree with him, that he has *evacuated all the excuses of Schism from the pretence of tender conscience*; for none will be very forward to pretend a tender conscience (of his making) lest he be beg'd for an Idiot, and sent to the Colledg of all Fools: But for his boast of *evacuating excuses and palliations*, it's but the *Rodomantodo* of *Seignior di Medico Campo*. He that fetcht *Prestor Johns* Head from *china*, after it had been a fortnight buried, and set it on his shoulders again: He that cured *Sbirley* in the *Grand Soppies Court*, when he had been twice shot through with Ordnance, and had two Cannon-bullets in each thigh: He that gathered up the vomited fragments of his Friend, eaten by the *Canibals*, placed them together, and restored him to a perfect Man again. But I shall leave the *Enquirer* to the pleasing Dream of his Heroick Victories.

His Argument from the danger of introducing *Popery* by our Divisions is seasonable, and his Counsel thereupon grateful, only we could wish he would prescribe it to those whose Circumstances enable them to remove our differences, by removing their true and proper causes. And let me remind him for a farewell; That whosoever shall deny us the Liberty to judg of the Lawfulness of our own Acts, or shall teach us the Art to rub on with a doubting Conscience, has paved a broad Causey for, and rear'd a Triumphant Arch to Entertain his *Holiness*, if the wisdom of our *Superiours* (not imposed upon by such trifling declamations) did not obstruct his entrance.

F I N I S.

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